

BRILL'S COMPANION TO  
CLASSICS IN  
THE EARLY  
AMERICAS



*Edited by*  
Maya Feile Tomes,  
Adam J. Goldwyn  
and Matthew Duquès

BRILL

## Brill's Companion to Classics in the Early Americas

# Brill's Companions to Classical Reception

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# Synecdoche in Reverse: America's Transhemispheric Classics

Maya Feile Tomes

## 1 Overtures<sup>1</sup>

We live in a world of lines. Of borders policed, boundaries erected, language barriers bumped up against, ideologies delineated. While no corner of the globe is exempt, America – by which we mean the full continental and Caribbean region and indeed, in a sense, the western hemisphere as a whole – has had a particularly pronounced relationship with lines: from the ones plotted across the map by the 1493 Papal Bull *Inter Caetera* and its offshoot, the *Línea de Tordesillas* (1494) – pole-to-pole cartographic plumbines by which, slicing through what is now Brazil, the world was unilaterally carved up into Spanish and Portuguese halves – to dividers of a more tangible variety, as embodied in recent times by the notorious United States/Mexico border wall.<sup>2</sup> The impulse towards globalization – which acquired new dimensions of meaning precisely in the period under consideration in this volume – is matched in vehemence seemingly only by the determination *not* to globalize (or at least not with one's immediate neighbors). More than five centuries apart, the Spanish/Portuguese

<sup>1</sup> Drafts of this introduction have benefited from comments from my co-editors, from the anonymous reader for the press, and from David Lupter and Andrew Laird. All errors and quirks of opinion remain my own.

<sup>2</sup> *Inter Caetera* was one of the so-called 'Bulls of Donation' by which all the lands encountered by Columbus beyond a certain point in the Atlantic were 'donated' by the Pope to the Crown of Spain. The Treaty of Tordesillas the following year attempted to establish the precise zones – hemispheres – of Spanish and Portuguese jurisdiction. As a circumferential line (as opposed to merely a meridian), the *Línea de Tordesillas* sliced correspondingly through the 'East Indies' on the opposite side of the globe as well: its exact longitudes were a source of endless dispute. See further Ricardo Padrón, *The Spacious Word: Cartography, Literature, and Empire in Early Modern Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) and most recently *The Indies of the Setting Sun: How Early Modern Spain Mapped the Far East as the Transpacific West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020). See also Nicolás Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2008). For seminal theorization of the U.S.–Mexican border experience, see Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987).

Tordesillas Line, running North–South, and the Mexican/U.S. border wall, running East–West, stand for just some of the geopolitical, imperial, cultural, linguistic, racial, and gender(ed) lines which cut across America and through its populations.

Academics inhabit a world of disciplinary lines. Intellectual traditions, ideological commitments, increasing tendencies towards hyper-specialization and, as ever, the particular local context – and language – of knowledge production all serve, among other factors, to carve up scholarly endeavor along a further series of methodological and linguistic lines, keeping fields of inquiry, and even sets of practitioners within the same field, cut off from one another. The result here too is a globalized world – globalized academe – afflicted by ever more atomization and siloization. This is as true of the discipline of Classics – with its fervid divisions and contentions between interpretive communities – as any other and has by these same processes further worked to isolate classicists from scholars in other related fields which – and who! – would surely have a lot to say to one another. These disciplinary lines have their own complex intellectual and cultural-historical genealogies stretching back over centuries – again, often precisely to the early modern period itself, if not further still – which continue to shape the field(s) of Classics and classical reception studies today. In particular, forms of Eurocentrism and more generally (yet no less restrictively) Anglocentrism, combined with traditional scholarly preferences for certain types of cultural production – and certain communities of cultural producers – at the expense of others, have conspired to privilege the study of Classics in, and the study of the classical traditions of, certain parts of the world over other ones. This is true both in terms of the material considered to be ‘classical’ in the first place, as also – and this is more what we mean here – of the receptions of the European ‘classical’ produced around the globe. In the case of the Americas, traditions of ‘Classics’ education and acts of classical reception from Anglophone America – most especially the area corresponding to today’s U.S.A. – have long loomed large in mainstream classical scholarly consciousness, whereas classical traditions and engagements from the (larger and more populous) non-Anglophone Americas have – traditionally, at least<sup>3</sup> – been firmly off the radar. (The term ‘mainstream’ is itself a problematic

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3 Though this is certainly now changing, as attested by important new publications such as Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller, eds., *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America* (Chichester: Wiley/SLAS, 2018), Rosa Andújar and Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos, eds., *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), and Germán Campos Muñoz, *The Classics in South America: Five Case Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2021). In general, see also Andrew Laird’s other recent work, especially on the Mesoamerican context. Earlier, see the seminal studies of Sabine MacCormack, *Religion in the Andes: Vision*

concept *qua* self-perpetuating and self-policing.) The Iberian Americas have been a notable casualty of this conventional delineation of interests, as have areas falling within what is now Canada (early modern *Nouvelle France*), affecting everything from the research published to the postgraduate projects undertaken: anecdotally, one still hears of proposals for dissertations relating to receptions in those areas being deemed insufficiently 'classical' – that nebulous metric – and consequently rejected, or at least not funded. The Caribbean, with its multiplicity of criss-crossing cultures and languages – albeit English among them – has likewise struggled to come properly into focus, or only patchily so. For most professional classicists today, this all translates into a vastly over-inflated sense of the role of Anglo North America and correspondingly shorter shrift for the Francophone and, above all, Iberophone Americas (continental and Caribbean):<sup>4</sup> a disregard which is not only unjust but, as we shall see, historically unjustified. Suffice it to say that even less room – and even more historical injustice – is reserved for those communities across the Americas who do, or did, not speak and operate in European languages at all.

This volume operates at the intersection of these sets of lines: in the latticework where the ones along which America has been, and continues to be, divided meet some of those along which studies of the receptions of classical material in the Americas have typically been arrayed. The aim is to rattle

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and *Imagination in Early Colonial Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991) and *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, and Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); also Wolfgang Haase and Meyer Reinhold, eds., *The Classical Tradition and the Americas*. Vol. 1, Part. 1: *European Images of the Americas and the Classical Tradition* (Berlin/New York: De Gruyter, 1994) – an ambitious multi-part venture which regrettably did not proceed beyond this first instalment – and David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003). Material from the Ibero-American context is finally also beginning to find its way into collections organized along thematic as opposed to merely area-specific lines, including Shane Butler, ed., *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), Edmund Richardson, ed., *Classics in Extremis: The Edges of Classical Reception* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), and Joachim Jacob and Johannes Süßmann, eds., *Der neue Pauly: Das 18. Jahrhundert – Lexikon zur Antikerezeption in Aufklärung und Klassizismus* (Stuttgart/Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 2018).

- 4 In one of his earlier contributions to the field, Andrew Laird – pioneer of the study of Latin American Classics in the Anglophone sphere – decried the degree to which mainstream classicists treat the classical traditions of Latin America with 'indifference' and deem them 'irrelevant': Laird, *The Epic of America: An Introduction to Rafael Landívar and the Rusticatio Mexicana* (London: Duckworth, 2006), 5. For signs of an incipient sea change in this regard, see Laird, "Classical Letters and Millenarian Madness in Post-Conquest Mexico: The *Ecstasis* of Fray Cristóbal Cabrera (1548)", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 24, no. 1 (April 2017), 78.

at that lattice. After all, as is well known, lines – in particular the most fervently plotted and policed – merely masquerade as meaningful edges of zones of separation while frequently in fact constituting sites of the most intensive interaction: hives of activity thrumming ceaselessly with the movement of peoples, materials, and ideas.<sup>5</sup> Our subject matter is a case in point: the disciplinary and geopolitical lines along which inquiry into classical traditions in the Americas has been drawn are by no means watertight, not least because the lines observed today in both quarters are often anachronistic for the period in question. All efforts to carve up the Earth's surface along humanly imposed lines are in the end as arbitrary as they are artificial and so it always pays to look across them, worry at them, dismantle them. In so doing, this also forces a radical reassessment or relativization of perspective and a flattening of traditional hierarchies of value and of perceived priority. Our own framing perspective in this volume is transhemispheric, taking the swooping synoptic view of America as a whole that allows its geopolitical contours to fade out and the region to be treated as, precisely, a region. In spheres not limited to the Anglophone, the word 'America' today is widely used as a term denoting, and quite interchangeable with, 'United States':<sup>6</sup> a form of metonym or inverse synecdoche by which the part is not made to stand for the whole (*pars pro toto*) but the whole for the part (*totum pro parte*).<sup>7</sup> Our transhemispheric attentions to Classics in 'America' are designed to 'de-synecdochize': a perspective where the whole is *all* its parts.

5 On boundaries as 'third spaces' of cultural interaction which 'unsettle the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power', see Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London/New York: Routledge, 1994). For mutually contrastive perspectives on such interactions in the Latin American context, see, e.g., Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Serge Gruzinski, *La pensée métisse* (Paris: Fayard, 1999) / *The Mestizo Mind: The Intellectual Dynamics of Colonization and Globalization*, trans. Deke Dusinberre (London/New York: Routledge, 2002).

6 See Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 10, on this usage as an amusingly 'pompous term in the inventory of the same cultural geography that has the West bordering the North Atlantic'. In the Lusosphere, as in the Anglo, 'americano' is now likewise standardly used with reference to the U.S.A.; by contrast, 'América' in Spanish continues to denote the whole continent.

7 Some definitions of 'synecdoche' take it as describing the phenomena of *pars pro toto* and *totum pro parte* alike; in general, however, its use as *pars pro toto* is more conventional, hence my designation of the opposite as a more marked 'reverse' form. See further Heinrich Lausberg (et al.), *Handbook of Literary Rhetoric: A Foundation for Literary Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

Several of the terms we have already had occasion to use here are also in their own ways anachronistic, problematic, or both. This volume concerns 'Classics' or 'classical' receptions in and from 'America' during the 'early modern' period. These are all convenient if ultimately inadequate – or inadequate but convenient – shorthands, all with European origins and Eurocentric premises which must be explored and exposed. The term 'America', for instance, is not only the object of widespread U.S.-centric synecdochic (ab)use but Eurocentric by definition: a name that is not just European but of an individual European – Amerigo Vespucci – and constructed by analogy with pre-existing Indo-European continental naming conventions. The term 'Latin America', which also features extensively, is then further anachronistic in its own way: though the term's origins are disputed – what exactly *is* so 'Latin' about Latin America? – it most likely emerged only sometime in the nineteenth century, several centuries into the period of which it now gets used.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, it is not markedly better to use terms like 'Ibero-America' – or 'Franco-' or 'Anglo-America' – either, for these spaces did not simply snap into being overnight but were in the process of becoming so throughout the period in question and may thus, at any given moment, be anachronisms too. The term 'Classics', meanwhile, is anachronistic when used with reference to *any* part of the period under consideration here, for the discipline in its modern professional sense – and current configuration<sup>9</sup> – did not exist by that name or in the same terms at the times in question at all. What we would today call 'Classics' was imparted, imbibed, and engaged with in different ways and invoked by different kennings. The term 'c/Classics', though widely used in this volume – starting with its title – is thus always to be understood as a lazy shorthand for engagement with that body of material now thought of as classical.

The term 'classical' in this acceptance is taken to denote the cultural output of the Greek and Roman societies which existed in and around the Mediterranean Basin during the era periodized in the European context as 'antiquity'.<sup>10</sup> 'Classical' is thus used, for our purposes, as quasi-synonymous

8 In general see Walter Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Malden, MA/Oxford: Blackwell, 2005). Andújar and Nikoloutsos in their introduction to *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage*, "Staging the European Classical in 'Latin' America: An Introduction", 1–2, have recently made a similar point.

9 Recall indeed that, until not so long ago, the 'two tongues' of ancient study were not the current familiar pair – Greek and Latin – but rather Greek and Hebrew.

10 For key interrogation of the vexed concept of the 'classical' in this regard, see James I. Porter, ed., *Classical Pasts: The Classical Traditions of Greece and Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005). For another take, see more recently Michael Silk, Ingo Gildenhard, and Rosemary Barrow, *The Classical Tradition: Art, Literature, Thought* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2014). The move to challenge the narrow prevailing definition of the

with 'Greco-Roman' and with the subsequent cultural iterations that engage with, or owe – or trace – their origins to, that Greco-Roman world. Of course, employing 'classical' in this way means subscribing or at least acquiescing to the use of the term in this one particular hijacked sense (there are others),<sup>11</sup> seized and invested with a temporo-geographical specificity associating it with the Mediterranean Basin at a certain historical moment, and indeed with a very exclusive – and often elitist – version thereof within these already tight parameters. Even *within* this rooted 'Mediterranean' sense of the classical, why only 'Greece' and 'Rome'? What about Sparta or Egypt? Syria or Byzantium? And so forth. And what is it precisely that makes 'Ancient' Greece more 'classical' than, say, 'Ancient' Egypt? The qualifying criteria are rarely explicit. Is it a particular degree of time-depth? (But *what* degree?) Or is it about perceived artistic singularity and 'value' (whence it is a perilously slippery slope down into ideas about artistic and cultural superiority)? After all, this use of 'classical' interacts with certain philosophical, ideological, and aesthetic criteria arbitrating in the domain of 'merit' which are Eurocentric – and indeed frequently themselves Greco-Romano-centric – in origin and to which particular value judgements attach. At the same time, proceeding instead by analogy – i.e., extending the term for instance to Classical Chinese or, more germanely for this volume, Classical Mayan, say – brings problems of its own. After all, what senses of the term, when not the geographical, are actually being extended or calqued? We are straight back to the contested question of its premises. Even arguing that the metric is purely temporal is no simple solution, for that in turn presupposes that the extremely temporally 'remote' and 'ancient' are by definition to be considered the privileged sites of utmost interest in the first place. The degree of great temporal remove – while never being

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'classical' and indeed the 'Greco-Roman' in academe is sometimes traced to the firecracker effect of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, of which the first of its three volumes appeared in 1987. Within classical reception studies, recent works such as Emily Greenwood, *Afro-Greeks: Dialogues between Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Classics in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: OUP, 2010), Edith Hall, Richard Alston, and Justine McConnell, eds., *Ancient Slavery and Abolition: From Hobbes to Hollywood* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), Justine McConnell, *Black Odysseys: The Homeric Odyssey in the African Diaspora since 1939* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), Margaret Malamud, *African Americans and the Classics: Antiquity, Abolition and Activism* (London/New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), and John Levi Barnard, *Empire of Ruin: Black Classicism and American Imperial Culture* (Oxford: OUP, 2018), among others, strive to open out and diversify the field in important ways – though much more still remains to be done.

11 'Classical music', for instance, conventionally denotes a quite different historical-cultural context and operates its own set of aesthetic and technical criteria. The same is true, *mutatis mutandis*, in a wide variety of other fields.

specified or quantified precisely – is itself thus valorized as significant, even superior, as if ultimate cultural interest were guaranteed to be found down at particular strata (metaphorical or literal). Again, value judgements inhere. In other words, the emphasis on and apparently self-evident importance of the products of a 'remote' antiquity as *the* culturally foremost category is itself a Eurocentric preoccupation built by analogy with the perceived pre-eminence of the Greco-Roman,<sup>12</sup> trumping interest in, say, the nearer past – or indeed the present or the future. More to the point, it trumps alternative epistemes or cosmovisions that might organize time and information differently altogether or have other aesthetic standards and ways of assigning value. Versions of this problem have been identified before, of course, but no satisfactory way has yet been found out of the bind. The term is thus once again employed here in the conventional sense too, but provisionally and with transparency about the fact that this *is* what it is being used to mean: this is a volume about the American fate(s) of the Greco-Roman 'classical' and no other.

This volume on the classical in America, then, is a study of the arrival of, encounter with, and engagement of Greco-Roman culture in the lands of the western hemisphere during a period we are terming 'early'. 'Early' can be taken either as betokening the first phases of the American–European encounter and its initial contact phenomena, which is arguably also the more neutral usage, for the clock does at least start running – so to speak – for both sides at the same moment; although, that said, in practice references to perceptions and experiences of 'early America' are generally still often used with an unspoken '...for/by Europeans' implicit. Alternatively, the 'early' of 'early America' can be taken as short for 'early modern', which is the sense in which it is primarily used in this volume. The 'early modern' era is understood here as the period running from the late fifteenth century until the (very) long eighteenth:

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12 As Andrew Laird reminds me, the Roman poet Horace – to evoke an 'ancient' authority just as we are attempting to denature any automatic assumptions about the 'ancient' location of the authoritative! – himself reflected on the antiquity-as-value conflation at *Epistles* 2.19–89. For further denaturing of definitions of the 'classical' and 'ancient', and for discussion of the obsession with 'remote' antiquity as a Eurocentric standard in itself, see Ute Schüren, Daniel Marc Segesser, and Thomas Späth, eds., *Globalized Antiquity: Uses and Perceptions of the Past in South Asia, Mesoamerica, and Europe* (Berlin: Reimer, 2015). Eric Cullhed has also recently suggested that we should 'circumscribe and ... relativise the importance of the classical tradition alongside other pre-modern narratives', in his "Born with the Wrinkles of Byzantium: Unclassical Traditions in Spanish America, 1815–1925", in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, 183. On the transplantation of the term 'classic(al)' – with connotations of time-depth and/or cultural pre-eminence – to the Mesoamerican context, see also Byron E. Hamann, "Comparison and Seeing in the Mediterranean", 71, in the same volume.



this coincides or at least overlaps with the sense in which most historians employ it and, in the American case, takes us essentially from the dawn of the European–American encounter all the way through to the protracted throes of the various eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American Independence movements. As a designator, however, it too sits within a schema of ultimately Eurocentric periodizations, located on that same continuum that stretches back to what for Europe is ‘antiquity’. Studies of the Americas of the post-1492 period under the sign of ‘early modern’ are thus again brought into the fold of a term which only really makes sense on that longer, Eurocentric spectrum. An alternative – without even getting into the question of those alternative Amerindian paradigms of space-time far beyond our own competencies here – would be to prefer the term ‘colonial period’, which at least acknowledges the power structures of domination, control, and violence that characterized – and still characterize – life in the Americas (and Africa) during that period. However, as the same period in Europe is not known likewise as the ‘colonial’ or ‘imperial’ era,<sup>13</sup> the use of ‘colonial period’ somewhat complicates matters for comparatist work which needs to be able to refer to phenomena in Europe and America in the same breath. As our volume is fundamentally comparative, its gaze ranging not only around the western hemisphere but back and forth across the Atlantic, it has ultimately seemed most sensible to employ a term which is commonly used and understood in both contexts. Without pretending that this is the only or even the best solution, we therefore use the term ‘early modern’ in the hope that it may at least lubricate transhemispheric – by which we now mean transatlantic as well as trans-American – comparatism and facilitate a clearer understanding of relative chronology, allowing readers to organize and sequence events across both America and Europe in relation to one another. Better still of course would be a complete relativization of ‘antiquity’,<sup>14</sup> and indeed ‘modernity’, itself – though this is beyond our scope and powers here. We can only record the hope that, while continuing to use these and other shorthands, we do not undervalue or efface the problematics of any of them.

Our own interest in the period – whatever one chooses to call it – is an interest in the time when the story of ‘Classics’ in America first began and played out in its initial iterations. For reasons of the atomization and dissociation outlined above, there is currently no scholarly study which sets out to tell this story for America as a whole. In general, studies of cultural phenomena in

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13 Although terms such as ‘Age of Empire’ and ‘Age of Discovery’ are certainly used – if, thankfully, increasingly falling out of favor.

14 On the relativization of antiquity, see further Schüren *et al.*, eds., *Globalized Antiquity*.

the Americas – and this is true not only of the ‘classical’ – tend to get sliced up as the object of investigation of different scholarly communities according to language (Anglophone as opposed to Lusophone or Francophone, say), by regional criteria (often along modern-day national boundaries, anachronistic for the context in question), or – traditionally perhaps among the most common – along the axes of erstwhile colony and metropole, which also interacts with the linguistic criterion: thus material from Brazil is taken in relation to Portugal,<sup>15</sup> material from the Hispanophone lands to Spain, and so on. All these cultural products, though sharing the same local, continental, and/or hemispheric American space, are thus rarely if ever taken in relation to one another, meaning that transhemispheric trends and other supraregional phenomena struggle to come into focus.<sup>16</sup> Even within the Iberian world, the aforementioned colony–metropolis axes mean that material from the Lusophone context is still only relatively rarely considered alongside material from the Hispanic context and *vice versa*, resulting in further fragmentation even within what is imagined as ‘Ibero-America’. Thus the one form of intra-American, i.e. inter-Iberian, comparatism which one might naively have assumed to be established across these supposedly most kindred contexts – certain key differences between colonial Brazil and colonial Hispano-America notwithstanding<sup>17</sup> – in practice remains similarly underdeveloped.<sup>18</sup> (Meanwhile, the colonial–metropolitan axes serve to fragment the European scene, too: all of a sudden there is a Peninsular Spanish Classics as distinct from a Portuguese Classics or a French Classics and so forth, whereas by all other accounts these

15 On the Lusophone context, see most recently the voluminous *A literatura clássica ou os clássicos na literatura: Presenças clássicas nas literaturas de língua portuguesa*, eds. Cristina Pimentel and Paula Morão (Lisbon: Húmus, 2019).

16 A recent exception is Kathryn Bosher *et al.*, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas* (Oxford: OUP, 2015) – though this does not focus on the early modern period specifically, and see also further Andújar and Nikoloutsos, “Staging the European Classical”, 7–8, for critique of the category of the ‘Omni-American’ as used in it.

17 Notably in terms of the introduction of printing technology and the foundation of universities: Brazil got its first printing press only in 1808 and institutions with full university status were not founded until the twentieth century. This distinction is technical, of course, for many forerunner institutions did exist; nonetheless, it remains indicative of key differences in policy vis-à-vis the Hispano-American context, on which more below, with n. 38 below. See further Laurence Hallewell, *Books in Brazil: A History of the Publishing Trade* (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1982).

18 A recent exception is Andújar and Nikoloutsos, *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage* (though Brazil still commands its own subsection). There is also now Jenny Mander, David Midgley, and Christine D. Beaulé, eds., *Transnational Perspectives on the Conquest and Colonization of Latin America* (New York: Routledge, 2019), featuring several chapters with classical connections.

'classical' manifestations are understood to have circulated and interacted widely across the European context, not limited by sovereign borders. Indeed, it is in these more blended, pan-European forms that 'Classics' got transmitted to the Americas.) As a result, it remains almost impossible to get a clear sense of what was going on across the American region as a whole during the period in question, meaning that the comparative perspective is still sorely lacking.<sup>19</sup> And yet the arrival of Greco-Roman material in America during this period took place across the entire hemisphere under circumstances which, while by no means identical, do share certain strong parallels; indeed, there is good reason to consider the arrival of Classics in America as one of the defining, even *unifying* features of its colonial experience on the literary-cultural and intellectual planes, regardless of whether the importers of that tradition were French, Portuguese, Spanish, English, Scottish, Dutch, or something else again. In other words, it was transhemispherically true. To date, however, the subject has never been treated as a pan-American phenomenon which (*pace* Rosa Andújar and Konstantinos Nikoloutsos's recent critique of the category of the 'Omni-American')<sup>20</sup> might reward consideration in comparative perspective. This means that even today we are still not in a position to ask – much less to answer – the question: 'What does early modern American Classics look like?' or 'How can we understand the origins and early days of "transatlantic" Classics?'

This volume seeks to pose these questions. Taking America synoptically, we approach the matter at the hemispheric, and, crucially, *transhemispheric* level, offering a window onto modes of classical reception during the early modern period across the whole region, from Canada to the Southern Cone via the Caribbean. We stress again that the idea in so doing is not to advocate for anything approaching the 'Omni-American' – on the contrary, we are interested in diversity in all its detail – but to develop a fine-grained yet robust sense of the comparative perspective and of the value of such comparatist endeavor. Our procedure is rooted in the conviction that there is merit – and mutual

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19 A few years ago a review by contributor to this volume Joanne van der Woude opened by lamenting that '[g]enuinely comparative scholarship in early North American history and literature is rare' (618–19) and comparative work 'on multiple colonies' rarer still, though some 'happy exceptions' are usefully footnoted (nn. 1–3), and the review itself is of four new books in the field, including the voluminous *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas: Empires, Texts, Identities*, eds. Ralph Bauer and José Antonio Mazzotti (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). In general see also *A Companion to the Literatures of Colonial America*, eds. Susan Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005). The review in question is van der Woude, "Comparative Work on the Colonial Americas", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (July 2013); it ends (632–4) with a set of suggested 'best practices' for engaging in such work in the future.

20 See n. 16 above.

illumination – to be had in approaching the classical in early America from this transhemispheric position: as a phenomenon across a continent convulsed by diverse yet in many ways shared experiences onto which the lens of the comparative will be meaningful. After all, for all their differences, the early Americas do remain united by many parallel processes: all parts of the continent have, at different times and in different ways, struggled with European invasion, conquest, and settler colonialism, with cataclysmic religious, linguistic, social, demographic, and ecological change or even collapse, with the yokes of coloniality, slavery, and forms of indentured servitude, and with the battles (both military and ideological) of emancipation and independence and the struggles for abolition – to name just a few of the salient phenomena that have characterized the distinct yet in many ways parallel destinies of the Americas. Thus, even if at different times, one can usefully chart how engagement with Greco-Roman material may have been instrumentalized in the processing of, and responses to, shared elements of this distinctly American experience.

We are especially concerned to cut across some of the linguistic and disciplinary lines that have most commonly served to splinter this field of inquiry: the volume brings together scholars who might define, or be institutionally defined, as classicists, early modernists, Americanists, Latin Americanists, African Americanists, and cultural historians and literary scholars of various stripes, spanning material from areas where the (now hegemonic) language of the European importers was variously Spanish, Portuguese, French, or English and which was itself produced in all these languages as well as, to a significant degree, also in Latin.<sup>21</sup> The volume thus aims to trace differences and commonalities from a whole range of production contexts across the hemisphere, while at the same time clearly not being in a position to cover everything: consideration of the activities of some of early America's other European

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21 That Latin was used all across the Americas still requires more recognition than it has hitherto received, although, again, the situation is changing; see further n. 4 above. Key in this regard is the new body of work being done on the Latin of Latin America, which has traditionally been among the most neglected of the American contexts in this regard, too: see recently Andrew Laird, "Latin America", in *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, eds. Philip Ford et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), and *id.*, "Colonial Spanish America and Brazil", in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*, eds. Sarah Knight and Stefan Tilg (Oxford: OUP, 2015), with the suggested further reading listed at the end; also Maya Feile Tomes, *Neo-Latin America: The Poetics of the New World in Early Modern Epic* (Támesis, forthcoming). Earlier, see, e.g., Ignacio Osorio Romero, "Latín y neolatín en México", in *La tradición clásica en México*, eds. Ignacio Osorio et al. (Mexico City: UNAM, 1991), and José Manuel Rivas Sacconi, *El latín en Colombia: bosquejo histórico del humanismo colombiano* (Bogotá: Instituto Caro y Cuervo, 1949). On the Latin-language output of New France – another widely overlooked area – see n. 27 below.

linguistic-cultural communities – including Dutch, German, and Welsh, among others – remains regrettably absent from this account, as do the activities of so many of America's own linguistic communities. That Latin was widely used across the early Americas is at least – and at last – coming to be properly recognized and, as such, itself constitutes another unifying point of the early American transhemispheric 'classical' experience: along with the various vernacular languages of the invaders, Latin too arrived in all cases to all areas in which the incomers – especially, though by no means exclusively, Catholic ones – settled even semi-permanently. Early Franco- and Ibero-America were thus notably 'Latinate' in this regard. But Latin and the various European vernacular imports were naturally not the only languages in use in the contexts in question, and we are especially concerned in this volume wherever possible to trace early modern 'classical' engagements involving Amerindian communities and nations including Guaraní, Tupí, Nahuá, Pequot, Iroquois/Haudenosaunee, and Wendat.<sup>22</sup> This should not, of course, be taken to imply that this immense diversity of experience can be homogenized or in any way unproblematically folded into classical modes: some types of lived experience are not – *and would not aspire to be* – 'legible' in a classical key at all, and nor, we stress, is it any virtue to be. In a related observation by Gayatri Spivak in the recent paraphrase of Natasha Tanna, the 'importance of recognising untranslatability' stands baldly against that characteristic 'imperialist assumption that everything "other" can be accessed and known':<sup>23</sup> against – now in Spivak's own formulation – that blithe 'confidence in accessibility in the house of power'.<sup>24</sup> In other words, it is held to be (neo-)imperialist to assume that everything can just be easily *written in*. Spivak's consideration of the '*untranslatable*'<sup>25</sup> thus interacts with our ideas here about the (il)legible, on which see further Dan-el Padilla Peralta in this volume on the 'scriptability' – or not – of non-hegemonic

22 On some early intersections between Tupí and European frameworks of Latinate heritage, see recently Vivien Kogut Lessa de Sá and Caroline Egan, "Translation and Prolepsis: The Jesuit Origins of a Tupí [sic] Christian Doctrine", in *Cultural Worlds of the Jesuits in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Linda Newson (London: University of London Press, 2020). From the North American context, see also Andrew Newman, *On Records: Delaware Indians, Colonists, and the Media of History and Memory* (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), for phenomena including the migrations of the Dido myth in that context.

23 Natasha Tanna, *Queer Genealogies in Transnational Barcelona: Maria-Mercè Marçal, Cristina Peri Rossi and Flavia Company* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2019), 42.

24 Gayatri Spivak, "The Politics of Translation", in *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. Lawrence Venuti (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 325.

25 *Ibid.*, discussing a textual vignette with 'the mark of untranslatability' emblazoned firmly upon it (emphasis original).

experience in classical modes. At the same time, the lines in these situations are rarely clear-cut – as compellingly demonstrated by our contributors both individually and collectively – and so, whilst not presuming to write everything *in*, it is certainly no solution just to leave~write out either.

The account of Classics in the early Americas provided by this volume also expressly sets out to offer a corrective to versions which would still have Ibero-America in second place in the story, when not absent altogether: in fact the tale of Classics in America begins in – and was for over a century more or less 'exclusive to' – the Iberian Americas,<sup>26</sup> which the volume thus seeks to reinscribe at both the origin and the heart of our narrative. Classical cultural production – be it in French or Latin – from the territories of early modern New France has for related reasons likewise been traditionally under-served and not yet fully entered 'mainstream' scholarly consciousness either: we salute the rich and growing body of work currently emerging in the field of early 'Canadian' Classics and hope that this volume's pair of contributions will become participants in the developing dialogue in that also unduly neglected area.<sup>27</sup> However, whilst certainly underappreciated, in general the Francophone context has not – except insofar as *all* areas of the Americas have at times been on the receiving end of anti-'New World' prejudice – had to contend with quite the same pointed charges of 'inferiority' and cultural 'secondariness', even 'backwardness', that have been levelled at the Iberian world: hence our particular attentions to the Iberian Americas in what follows. Decentring from the U.S.A. in these ways – not in order to diminish the clearly important activities there too, but in order to relativize perspective and

26 See again, for instance, Lupher, *Romans in a New World*.

27 Recent work attesting to the rich body of early modern 'Canadian' classical material includes Jean-François Cottier, Haijo Westra, and John Gallucci's chapter on "North America" in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*; Ann M. Blair's chapter on "North America" in *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*; Peter O'Brien, "*Si potes exemplo moveri, non propiore potes*: Emotional Reciprocity in Laurent Le Brun's *Nova Gallia*", in *Changing Hearts: Performing Jesuit Emotions between Europe, Asia and the Americas*, eds. Yasmin Haskell and Raphaële Garrod (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2019), as well as his contribution to *Tangence* 99 (2012), as below; William M. Barton, "The Third Elegy of Laurent Le Brun's (S.J.) *Franciad: Difficultas itinerum in silvis Canadensibus*, The Difficulties of Expression in the Canadian Forest", *Mittellateinisches Jahrbuch* 49, No. 3 (2013), and his co-authored chapter in this volume; the section on 'Amérique du Nord (anglophone et francophone)' in *Les Classiques aux Amériques: Réécritures des classiques grecs et latins sur le continent américain et dans les Caraïbes*, eds. Cécile Chapon and Irena Trujic, *Comparatismes en Sorbonne* 6 (2015); and the pair of special issues of the Canadian journal *Tangence*: 'À la recherche d'un signe oublié: le patrimoine latin du Québec et sa culture classique', *Tangence* 92 (2010), and 'Nova Gallia: recherches sur les écrits latins de Nouvelle-France', *Tangence* 99 (2012), both edited by Jean-François Cottier.

perceived hierarchies of priority, both conceptual and temporal – thus allows other, equally ebullient areas of the continent to come properly into focus. Rather than a tale with Anglo-America as its centre, the volume takes Classics in America as a truly transhemispheric phenomenon and aims to reflect this in its proportions and emphases.

At the same time, while used here above all to refer to pan-American transhemisphericity, it goes without saying that our tale is ‘transhemispheric’ in another sense too, for Classics in the early Americas is by definition always – ‘always-already’, always *also* – a transatlantic phenomenon.<sup>28</sup> Thus, though we have said that we are moving away from the standard colony–metropole axes that have tended to structure academic engagement with this material, we by no means wish or mean by that token to occlude the irreducible transatlantic dimension of the question as a whole. As such, the chapters in this collection do not set out to operate within solely American parameters but to consider materials and conceptual manoeuvres which, explicitly or implicitly, function within – indeed, depend for their very existence on – a broader transatlantic, even global, matrix. Double or rather multi-directional vision becomes essential here as the gaze of contributors and readers alike ranges back and forth across the Atlantic at the same time as up and down the Americas. We are thus dealing with a transhemispheric Classics in both – *all* – senses of the word: trans-American and transatlantic. The story of American classical receptions sits at the intersection of North and South, East and West – at the vanishing point where it becomes meaningless to speak of such axes at all.

## 2 Back to Beginnings

The ancient Greco-Roman and American(-to-be) worlds first met, in a temporal paradox worthy of Borges himself,<sup>29</sup> on 12 October 1492, when Columbus and his crew landed on an island probably in the modern-day Bahamas and

28 During the early modern period it also became an increasingly transpacific phenomenon. For emerging work in the latter area – which will in turn allow yet further comparative transhemispheric frameworks to come into focus – see the current and forthcoming output of scholars such as Stuart M. McManus on Classics in Iberian Asia; for broader Pacific ‘(re)orientation’, see Padrón, *The Indies of the Setting Sun*.

29 Or of Brazilian literary critic Haroldo de Campos, who developed a ‘synchronous’ view of Brazilian literature in which ‘Homer is Pound’s contemporary’: see *A arte no horizonte do provável e outros ensaios* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1969), 209, as also discussed by Connie Bloomfield-Gadêlha in this volume. On Jorge Luis Borges’s own relationship to the classical past(?), see recently Laura Jansen, *Borges’ Classics: Global Encounters with the Graeco-Roman Past* (Cambridge: CUP, 2018).



certainly somewhere in the Caribbean Basin. It is well known that classical theories and geographical authorities were instrumental in prompting Columbus to conceive and undertake his proposed voyage into the western unknown along the lines that he did, as also in his *post hoc* attempts to make sense of what he had done.<sup>30</sup> Following in his footsteps, countless fellow voyagers and conquistadors soon began arriving in the Americas with – to borrow a phrase from David Lupher in his seminal 2003 study – the Greeks and the Romans ‘packed securely in the[ir] mental baggage’.<sup>31</sup> But not only mental: classical texts and other materials began to make the journey across the Atlantic and arrive in the Americas from the earliest days of the American–European encounter in the ships and pockets of the Europeans who travelled there, starting with Columbus’s own.<sup>32</sup> In 1509 his son Hernando would arrive in the Caribbean with a trunk laden with Greek and Roman ‘classics’ – including multiple books in Latin and a voluminous Classical Greek dictionary – for a two-month sojourn on Hispaniola (modern-day Haiti and the Dominican

30 On the role of Greco-Roman geographical–eschatological authorities (which thereafter began to become more qualified as sources of ‘authority’) in determining Columbus’s course, see for instance Wey Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire*; also James Romm, *The Edges of the Earth in Ancient Thought: Geography, Exploration, and Fiction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992). On the *Libro de las Profecías* – the compilation in which Columbus attempted to account for the existence of lands reachable by sailing West – see, e.g., Carol Delany, “Columbus’ Ultimate Goal: Jerusalem”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 48, no. 2 (2006), and recently also discussion in Edward Wilson-Lee, *The Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books: Young Columbus and the Quest for a Universal Library* (London: William Collins, 2018). On America as a product of European thought patterns more broadly, see Edmundo O’Gorman, *La invención de América: el universalismo de la cultura de Occidente* (Mexico City/Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958); also Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America*.

31 Lupher, *Romans in a New World*, 1.

32 On some of Columbus’s own books, see Wilson-Lee, *Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books*. On Spanish sailor Jerónimo Aguilar shipwrecked in the Gulf of Mexico in 1511 with nothing but his Latin breviary, see Osorio Romero, “Latín y neolatín en México”, 7; Laird, *The Epic of America*, 9. On importing classical (and other) books to the Americas, Irving A. Leonard, *Books of the Brave: Being an Account of Books and of Men in the Spanish Conquest and Settlement of the Sixteenth-Century New World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1949; repr. 1992) and Ángel Rama, *La ciudad letrada* (Santiago de Chile: Tajamar, [1984] 2004) are, in their own ways, both classic studies; more recently, see, e.g., Natalia Maillard Álvarez, “The Early Circulation of Classical Books in New Spain and Peru”, in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in the Americas*, or Pedro M. Guibovich Pérez, “Books, Readers and Reading Experiences in the Viceroyalties of New Spain and Peru in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries”, in *The Edinburgh History of Reading*. Vol. 1: *Early Readers*, ed. Mary Hammond (Edinburgh: EUP, 2020). See also Hallewell, *Books in Brazil*.

Republic) at Santo Domingo.<sup>33</sup> By that time fellow Spaniard and renowned bishop-to-be Bartolomé de las Casas, himself a consummate Latinist similarly – if idiosyncratically – steeped in classical learning, had been a presence on Hispaniola for several years already. Hernando Colón, Las Casas, and other early ‘classicists’ like them thus stand at the start of what would develop into a long and vigorous tradition of importing Greco-Roman materials to the Americas – and of putting them to use there.

Though in time this would come to be true across the Americas, in the first instance all American–classical contact – like all early European–American contact phenomena of any kind – took place in the Caribbean and then on the mainland, first in and around what is now Mexico and then extending into South America: in other words, areas which now constitute – and were during that time in the process of becoming – the Iberophone Americas. This, then, is the arena in which the opening chapters of Classics in America played out.<sup>34</sup> By the 1520s, there were libraries on Hispaniola and Latin would be being taught in the Mexico City area;<sup>35</sup> in 1536, the first fully-fledged institution of European learning, the Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, with a Classics-centric curriculum the same as that of St Paul’s in London (on which see Andrew Laird in this volume), would be established in the Mexican capital by Franciscan missionaries;<sup>36</sup> and just two years later, in 1538 – which was also the year of the foundation of the Universidad de Santo Tomás de Aquino in Santo Domingo – the first printing press to be established in the Americas would arrive in Mexico, source of a steady stream of editions of classical texts and teaching materials over the decades to come.<sup>37</sup> A university followed in

33 Wilson-Lee, *Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books*, 117–24. See further José María Pérez Fernández and Edward Wilson-Lee, *Hernando Colón’s New World of Books: Towards a Cartography of Knowledge* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

34 This idea is developed in Maya Feile Tomes, “The Other Arena: Poetics Goes Global in the Iberian Atlantic, 1500–1650(+)”, in *Artes Poeticae: Formations and Transformations, 1500–1650*, eds. Micha Lazarus and Vladimir Brljak, *Classical Receptions Journal*, 13, no. 1 (2021).

35 On Hispaniola, see further Padilla Peralta in this volume. On Mexico, see Laird in this volume, as well as *id.*, “The Teaching of Latin to the Native Nobility in Mexico in the Mid-1500s: Contexts, Methods, and Results”, in *Learning Latin and Greek from Antiquity to the Present*, eds. Elizabeth Archibald, William Brockliss, and Jonathan Gnoza (Cambridge: CUP, 2015). See also Ignacio Osorio Romero, *Floresta de gramática, poética y retórica en Nueva España (1521–1767)* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1980).

36 See, e.g., José María Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista: empresa franciscana en México* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1974). Recently see also Julia McClure, *The Franciscan Invention of the New World* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2016).

37 One of the earliest items printed on it, in 1540, was a piece of original Latin poetry by a Spanish Franciscan named Cristóbal de Cabrera: see Andrew Laird, “Classical Letters and Millenarian Madness”, 80. See further Osorio Romero, “Latín y neolatín en México”.

Mexico City in 1551, which was also the year in which the first university in Peru – the Universidad Mayor de San Marcos, in Lima – was chartered. Lima would have its own printing press too by 1584, and further universities would have been founded in Cuzco, Quito and Bogotá before the century was out. With the arrival of the pedagogically-minded Jesuits in ever-increasing numbers from the latter half of the sixteenth century onwards, an enormous network of schools, colleges, and other institutions of learning spread across the Iberian Americas,<sup>38</sup> with a standardized Latinate curriculum – the formidable *Ratio studiorum* or 'System of Studies' – structured heavily around the Greco-Roman classics.<sup>39</sup> The result was that, as with the youths in the early sixteenth-century Franciscan classrooms of Mexico pursuing the same classical curriculum as those in London or Rotterdam, youths in Jesuit schools across the Ibero-Americas throughout this period were pursuing the same curriculum not only as each other but as their age-mates in classrooms in Europe and across the wider Catholic colonized world.<sup>40</sup> The central place of 'Classics' in this curriculum cannot be overstated:<sup>41</sup> Latin was medium and mainstay of this system of education – both object of, and itself the language of, learning – resulting in a floridly Latinate literary and scholarly culture

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In general, however, original Ibero-American literary compositions – many with highly classical credentials – were often not printed locally but dispatched across the Atlantic to European presses: see Pedro M. Guibovich Pérez, "Books, Readers and Reading Experiences", 183, 189. See also Feile Tómes, "Plurilingual Poetry and the Hinterland of Intertextuality: Europeanising Reading Culture in the Early Modern Iberian World", in *The Edinburgh History of Reading*. Vol. 1: *Early Readers*, ed. Mary Hammond (Edinburgh: EUP, 2020), 229.

38 Colleges had been founded in Salvador da Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, Lima, Mexico City, Potosí, Santiago de Chile, Bogotá, Córdoba del Tucumán and Buenos Aires – to name only the major ones – before the Mayflower had even set sail; see further n. 46 below. On the Mexican context in particular, see Ignacio Osorio Romero, *Colegios y profesores jesuitas que enseñaron latín en Nueva España (1572–1767)* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1979).

39 After various earlier incarnations, the *Ratio Studiorum* was codified in definitive form in 1599 and implemented in classrooms around the world in Jesuit missionary contexts. Allan Farrell, *The Jesuit "Ratio Studiorum" of 1599* (Washington, D.C.: Conference of Major Superiors of Jesuits, 1970) is an edition and translation into English.

40 See Feile Tómes, "Plurilingual Poetry", 232–3.

41 The bibliography on Jesuit education in the global context and the place of Classics therein is vast. For one starting point, see Yasmin Haskell, "Practicing What They Preach? Vergil and the Jesuits", in *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, eds., Joseph Farrell and Michael C.J. Putnam (Malden, MA/Oxford: Wiley–Blackwell, 2010); see also Osorio Romero, *Colegios y profesores jesuitas que enseñaron latín*.

throughout the early modern Iberian Americas.<sup>42</sup> During this period, nowhere except in Europe itself was the imparting of a ‘classical’ education more widespread or more systematized than in Ibero-America,<sup>43</sup> which in turn translated into a similarly vigorous culture of Classics-steeped creative output in Latin and the Iberian vernaculars alike.

It is difficult to do justice to the sheer volume and range of original literature (both poetry and prose), textbooks, and other scholarly materials – not to mention plays, speeches, and ephemera both surviving and unsurviving, along with all manner of visual-cultural items<sup>44</sup> – produced across the Iberophone region from the early-mid sixteenth century onwards. By contrast, the first Puritan ship did not arrive in Cape Cod Bay until 1620, over a century after the Spanish had first gained a serious foothold in the Caribbean and Mesoamerica and begun to teach Latin there;<sup>45</sup> the first university-style institution in Anglo North America, Harvard, was not established until 1636 – a century after the foundation of the first permanent European house of learning, the Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, in Mexico; and the first printing press – also at Harvard – was established in 1638: again, exactly a hundred years after its first Ibero-American counterpart, likewise in Mexico City.<sup>46</sup> It

42 For more on student numbers in the early modern Iberian Americas, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, “Envoi: Whose Classical Traditions?”, *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, 196–98.

43 It is not wholly clear, then, why Andújar and Nikoloutsos state that ‘[i]n Latin America, the Graeco-Roman Classics were not [so] embedded in the colonial curriculum or experience’ (“Staging the European Classical”, 3). See further Feile Tomes, “The Other Arena”, 129.

44 See, for instance, Jean Andrews and Alejandro Coroleu, eds., *Mexico 1680: Cultural and Intellectual Life in the ‘Barroco de Indias’* (Bristol: HiPLAM, 2007); John M.D. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons, eds., *Altera Roma: Art and Empire from Mérida to Mexico* (Los Angeles: Cotsen, 2016); and Alejandra Rojas Silva, “Gardens of Origin and the Golden Age in the Mexican *Libellus de medicinalibus indorum herbis* (1552)”, and Byron E. Hamann, “Comparison and Seeing in the Mediterranean”, both in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*.

45 Carrie Gibson has recently made a similar point in her book on the Hispanic heritage of North America, *El Norte: The Epic and Forgotten Story of Hispanic North America* (London: Grove Press, 2019), xiv.

46 Europeans had of course arrived in North America prior to 1620: see, e.g., Gibson, *El Norte*, on Spanish presences there in the early-mid sixteenth century, and Lupher in this volume on the Jamestown colony of 1609. However, it is with the arrival of the Puritans from 1620 that Classics in Anglo North America really got going: for a dedicated study, see Lupher’s recent *Greeks, Romans, and Pilgrims: Classical Reception in Early New England* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2017), with key bibliography. Compare Lupher, *Romans in a New World*, on the C16th Spanish Americas for perspective on the relative chronology. On the more northerly American Francophone context, with long-standing classical traditions of its own, see n. 27 above.

was also in the 1630s that the Jesuit missions began to get going in New France, marking the start of truly widespread Latin usage and 'classicality' in the most northerly Americas as well as in the future U.S.A. A key part of Harvard in its early years was Harvard Indian College, designed to impart a solid grounding in Latin, as well as Greek and Hebrew, as part of a wider education in the Judaeo-Christian worldview: the teaching of Latin to indigenous Mexicans had been the founding purpose of the aforementioned Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco and of the even earlier, if shorter-lived, San José de los Naturales (established 1527).<sup>47</sup> The first-ever doctoral degree to be awarded to an indigenous person – although not conferred until 1772 – would likewise be awarded by a university in Ibero-America (again, Mexico): the same did not occur in the United States until over a century later.<sup>48</sup> Even the wave of late eighteenth-century architectural neoclassicism of buildings like the U.S. Capitol and the White House,<sup>49</sup> designed in the mid-1790s and constructed over the coming half century, was mirrored – and again, in many cases, anticipated – by the tide of neoclassical structures which had already begun to characterize the built environment of many Ibero-American cities:<sup>50</sup> the Real Academia de San Carlos – royally chartered art college and bastion of neoclassicism – had opened its doors in Mexico City in 1781, for instance, while the current incarnation of the cathedral in Buenos Aires, famed for its arrestingly neoclassical façade, was under construction for much of the eighteenth century, with work continuing throughout more or less the same period as that of the U.S. Capitol. The story of Classics in the Americas, then, begins – and for around a century played out almost entirely in – Ibero-America.<sup>51</sup>

47 Laird, "The Teaching of Latin to the Native Nobility in Mexico in the Mid-1500s", 125.

48 Stuart M. McManus, "The Exemplary Power of Antiquity: Humanist Rhetoric and Ceremony in Seventeenth-Century New Spain", in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, 106 n. 3.

49 The design competitions for these buildings were judged by Thomas Jefferson and George Washington respectively. On Jefferson's classicality, see, e.g., Peter S. Onuf and Nicholas P. Cole, eds., *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World, and Early America* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011).

50 Cf. Cañizares-Esguerra, "Whose Classical Traditions?", 200. See also Andújar and Nikoloutsos, "Staging the European Classical", 2. The artistic and architectural manifestations of the classical in Ibero-America are overall less discussed than the literary (*pace* n. 44 above and n. 81 below), as also noted by Nicola Miller, "Classical Motifs in Spanish American Nation-Building: Looking Beyond the Elites", in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, 145.

51 And it is still going strong. Among multiple cultural manifestations, see Andújar and Nikoloutsos, "Staging the European Classical", 8, on how genres of Greco-Roman drama in particular 'continue[] to have a strong presence' in Latin America 'in modern times', '[e]specially in the past few decades' (1). See further n. 82 below.

Yet this version of the story, for all its vibrance and variety, will probably be unfamiliar to the majority of classicists and Americanists alike. In particular, its relative chronology – which reveals Ibero-America to have a rich and significantly longer-standing tradition of engagement with Greco-Roman material than anywhere else in the western hemisphere – may well come as a surprise to readers who, to borrow a phrase from historian Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, will ‘likely [have] been socialized into constructs’<sup>52</sup> whereby the goings-on of the Iberian world are presumed to be of lesser import and lower artistic quality, to the point that it becomes difficult to ascribe them primacy of any sort<sup>53</sup> – even temporal. Instead, Ibero-America is still standardly made to play second fiddle in the global context in general and to Anglo-America in particular, its cultural products and socio-cultural phenomena often sidelined to the point of total obscurity. It is all relative, of course: most Anglo-American examples or agents of classical reception are hardly what one might call household names these days either, and they too have suffered in certain spheres of the academy at the hands of those Americanists who, as a result of the more monolingual, monocultural, nationalistic agendas of the Cold War period during which the field of (Anglo) ‘American studies’ first developed, have tended to favor the study of materials – or aspects thereof – deemed to evince more properly ‘American’ aesthetic and politico-cultural concerns at the expense of the European classical.<sup>54</sup> This continues to color the pursuit of the discipline in certain quarters and schools (of thought?) today. Further, some groups – falling especially along racial, socio-economic, and/or gender lines and their intersectional zones – have always been decidedly more visible within Anglo-American

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52 Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*, 10.

53 Cañizares-Esguerra (*ibid.*) goes on to note that the boundaries seared across the Americas (and world), serving to relegate Ibero-America to an inferior plane, ‘have made it difficult for historians even to consider the possibility that voluminous and even pioneering scholarship ... could have been produced in Spain and Spanish America’ in the early modern period; instead, Iberian cultural efforts and scholarly efforts are blithely presumed to be ‘derivative and second-rate’.

54 I owe this summary of the situation in contemporary (Anglo) ‘American studies’ to my co-editors. On the early days of Classics in what is today the U.S.A., see n. 46 above; on its ever more thriving traditions in the eighteenth century, see for instance Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), and his more recent work including *The Golden Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome, and the Antebellum South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). On the twentieth century, see, e.g., Richard Waswo, *The Founding Legend of Western Civilization: from Virgil to Vietnam* (Hanover, N.H./London: Wesleyan University Press/University Press of New England, 1997), or Margaret Malamud, *Ancient Rome and Modern America* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). David Lupton, *Greeks, Romans, and Pilgrims*, 364 n. 7, supplies useful further bibliography.

classical studies than others: it is not just Anglo-American Classics, but always the *same* societal slices of Anglo-American Classics, which have been in the ascendant – though this is slowly changing along some of the lines on which several of the chapters in this volume themselves proceed.<sup>55</sup> In the context of global classical reception studies more broadly, however, it is undoubtedly still Anglo-America that has for a long time now been in the dominant, while Latin America's classical traditions have been equally long off the horizon, despite the precedence of the region's 'Classics'. Temporal priority is not (necessarily) to be mistaken for priority or preeminence of any other sort, of course, and certainly we do not mean to replace one set of prevailing cultural hegemonies with another: the corrective to Latin American effacement is not Latin American cultural supremacism. Rather, we propose a radical relativization in both chronology and perspective: one which is able to acknowledge Latin America as a place of 'firsts' and its subsequent traditions as correspondingly dynamic and diverse, beginning in the early-mid sixteenth century and effortlessly holding their own throughout the period during which 'Classics' began to get going elsewhere in the western hemisphere as well, after which these traditions came – *and continue* – to run in parallel. This will offer a flatter and fairer platform from which to assess the phenomenon as a whole in a relative, comparatist sense, moving away from the current one in which Anglo North America is rendered artificially prominent and the equally sophisticated, varied traditions of Latin America systematically suppressed. Likewise, the possibility or perceived likelihood of artistic value and interest in any given sphere should be neither self-evident nor foreclosed: here too perspective must be relativized.

The reasons for Ibero-America's disappearance from – or rather failure to appear on – the radar of modern constructions of the classical tradition in global perspective are both complex and dogged by misconceptions: a full account of the intellectual history of the question far exceeds that which can be offered here. Many of the variables, moreover, are not unique to or functions of the field of classical inquiry in particular but of wider (post)colonial phenomena affecting the region's geopolitics and profile as a whole in the sweeping cultural narratives still standardly constructed by hegemonic powers.<sup>56</sup> In this, Latin America has fallen foul of such categories – as insidious as they

55 See further n. 10 above.

56 For an attempt to redress parallel problems for the C19th context, see recently Andrew Ginger, *Instead of Modernity: The Western Canon and the Incorporation of the Hispanic* (c. 1850–75) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), which aims to restore 'the vast territories of the former Spanish Empire' – 'no longer just the fallen founders of modernity', 'lurking on the peripheries' – to the global cultural narrative.

are nebulous – as ‘America’ (when used as synonymous with ‘United States’), ‘the West’ (which has nothing to do with longitudes and everything to do with geopolitics), and even the ‘Global South’ (which is not co-extensive with ‘the southern hemisphere’, and in which not all ‘southern’ countries are equal). The invisibility of the Latin American classical tradition on ‘mainstream’ classicists’ horizons is thus bound up with wider problems relating to the writing-out, not to mention the whitewashing, of Ibero-American traditions from wider cultural narratives which themselves, and for *reasons* which themselves, go back to the early modern period.<sup>57</sup> Ever since Europeans’ irruption into the western hemisphere, and America’s onto European horizons, Ibero-American cultural and literary endeavor has met with widespread charges of secondariness, unoriginality, and sterility;<sup>58</sup> it has even been outright denied that it had or has any intellectual life worth speaking of.<sup>59</sup> Such accusations have certainly also been levelled – especially in the eighteenth century by Europeans such as Cornelius de Pauw or Guillaume Thomas Raynal<sup>60</sup> – at the Americas as a whole *qua* ‘New’ World (on which see in this volume Adam Goldwyn on the early U.S. context), just as there has been wanton whitewashing in the pursuit and study of North American Classics too. In general, however, the fact remains that the brunt of anti-American sentiment has been borne by Ibero-America in particular – as part of wider anti-Iberian polemic *tout court*, for reasons both relating to, yet also predating, the so-called *Leyenda Negra* or ‘Black Legend’.<sup>61</sup> Indeed some aspects of anti-Iberian polemic date

57 See Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*, 1–10.

58 See n. 53 above. For an example of this kind of statement, see Laura Fernández *et al.*, eds., *Clásicos para un Nuevo Mundo. Estudios sobre la tradición clásica en la América de los siglos XVI y XVII* (Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2016), 7.

59 On the C16th iterations of the debate, see, e.g., Andrew Laird, “Classical Traditions and Controversies in Latin American History”, in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, 12–13, or Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, “New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600–1650”, *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 1 (February 1999). For C18th examples, see David A. Brading, *Mexican Phoenix – Our Lady of Guadalupe: Image and Tradition across Five Centuries* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001), 131–155, or Andrew Laird, “Patriotism and the Rise of Latin in Eighteenth-Century New Spain: Disputes of the New World and the Jesuit Constructions of a Mexican Legacy”, *Renæssanceforum* 8 (2012). In general, see Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World*.

60 On Raynal’s controversial ‘History of the Two Indies’ (1770), see Cecil P. Courtney and Jenny Mander, eds., *Raynal’s Histoire des Deux Indes: Colonialism, Networks and Global Exchange* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2015); also Mander, “Introduction”, in *Transnational Perspectives*, 7–8.

61 The *Leyenda Negra* denotes the tide of accusations of egregious Spanish greed and brutality in the New World which would gain in momentum across the early modern period and



back in Europe to classical antiquity itself – Roman authors from the Iberian Peninsula frequently expressed anxiety, troped or otherwise, over their perceived second-class status vis-à-vis Italian-born counterparts – while anti-Ibero-American accusations along analogous lines have been bandied about practically since America first came to Europe's attention, becoming especially fervent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – which is not to say that they have ever gone away. The field of early modern Ibero-American 'Classics' has been no exception to this rule, nor did the situation noticeably improve over the period under consideration; if anything, it seems to get worse. By 1778 the Mexican-born Jesuit Diego José Abad was sufficiently exercised to produce a work entitled *Dissertatio ludicro-seria, num possit aliquis extra Italiam natus bene latine scribere...* ['Comico-serious treatise on whether or not anyone born outside Italy is capable of writing in Latin properly...'],<sup>62</sup> while fellow eighteenth-century Mexican Jesuit Francisco Javier Alegre<sup>63</sup> – perhaps the foremost Ibero-American 'classicist' of his day – railed against the degree to which Iberian literature and scholarship was maligned in the contemporary European context:

Este es un lugar en que yo querría detenerme mucho, y entrar en una disputa muy particularizada con los franceses y los ingleses, que se tienen por los únicos conocedores y apreciadores del mérito de la antigüedad, y desprecian la nación española como ignorante y bárbara en punto de bellas letras... ¿De dónde le viene a la Francia y a la Inglaterra, mucho menos culta que la Francia, este orgullo y soberbia con que se mofan de la España, sin haber leído sus autores ni tener más noticias de ellos que sus vagos y superficiales diccionarios?<sup>64</sup>

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was frequently used against Spain by its (especially Northern European, North American, and/or non-Catholic) detractors for purposes both justified and less justified. On anti-Spanish sentiment in Europe as pre-dating the emergence of the Americanocentric *Leyenda Negra*, however, see, e.g., Rolena Adorno, *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2007), 81, and, in general, 74–82; indeed, as mentioned, aspects of it go back to classical (Roman) antiquity itself.

62 On this work see further Laird, "Patriotism and the Rise of Latin in Eighteenth-Century New Spain", 236–43.

63 Recently on Alegre, see Felipe Reyes Palacios and José Quiñones Melgoza, eds., *Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux & Francisco Javier Alegre: "Arte Poética" – edición bilingüe* (Mexico City: UNAM, 2014), and Feile Tones, "Plurilingual Poetry", 234–38.

64 Reyes Palacios and Quiñones Melgoza, *Francisco Javier Alegre*, 86–7 (my translation).

[I should like to pause properly at this point and take very specific issue with the French and the English, who seem to think they are the only ones capable of understanding and appreciating the excellence of Antiquity, snubbing people from the Hispanic<sup>65</sup> context as ignorant and barbarous when it comes to *belles lettres*... . What is the source of this arrogance and pride that allows France and England – the latter still less cultured than the former! – to scorn Spain without having so much as read its literary works or gleaned any information beyond what is contained in those wishy-washy, superficial encyclopaedias of theirs?]

These words, dating from sometime in the mid-1770s, could just as easily have been penned to describe the complexion of the ‘mainstream’ classical scholarly scene today – and indeed practically have been: in the rhetorical crescendo to his 2018 piece on the Classics of colonial-era Latin America, Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra closes by reiterating his incredulity as to

why these traditions in the Americas, distinctive as they were, are not held to be as deep and as significant as those of, say, early modern France, Germany or Britain? ... [W]hy have intellectual historians (and historians of the classical tradition in particular) never even thought of looking at the global South to consider the extent to which the learned communities of Latin America might have influenced or even surpassed the achievements of those in Europe?<sup>66</sup>

This parallelism between Alegre and Cañizares-Esguerra, writing almost 250 years apart yet – in another quasi-Borgesian case of vertiginous historical synchronicity – seemingly occupying the exact same space of indignant, bewildered frustration, stands as a measure of the tenacity and entrenchment of the issue.

The unhappy position evinced in the 1770s by Alegre also bespeaks a particular spike in, or resurgence of, anti-Ibero-American sentiment at this point in the eighteenth century, connected at least in part to difficulties arising from the arrival of large numbers of expelled Ibero-American Jesuits (Abad and

65 Note that Alegre, though employing the terms ‘Spain’ and ‘Spanish nation’, is referring to the Hispanic sphere more broadly, and even to the Iberian context as a whole: he also includes Portuguese-language material in his fuller remarks (elided). If his use of ‘England’ here could similarly be taken in an extended sense to betoken the Anglophone world as a whole then his statement would become even more applicable to the modern panorama.

66 Cañizares-Esguerra, “Whose Classical Traditions?”, 200.

Alegre among them) in the Italian Peninsula at around that time: a sudden influx of 'classicists' to the home of 'Classics' itself – and a correspondingly fraught moment.<sup>67</sup> A second question to which we also cannot do adequate justice here is what in turn then happened to Classics within Ibero-America itself in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – especially in the wake of the expulsion of those same Jesuits, stalwarts of the classical education system, in 1759/67 – as independence-era fighters, ideologues, and reformers sought to reappropriate and mobilize classical traditions for their own political purposes, yet at the same time also to break with certain colonial-era intellectual traditions on political grounds. As a result, earlier cultural production was often tarred indiscriminately with the brush of imperialism and thus (baby, bathwater...) unflinchingly cast out: Latin American literature, on this narrative, begins *de novo* in the nineteenth century and its three preceding centuries of dynamic colonial history are sidelined – and maligned – often to the point of complete abandon. In certain schools of thought, anything 'classical' is simply deemed to be Eurocentric and/or culturally imperialist by definition and has attracted the sort of distaste that swiftly morphs into amnesia: an unfortunate writing-out of centuries of original Latin American colonial-era Classics-engaging material which is compelling and creative – and, most crucially, by no means automatically complicit with structures of imperialism merely by virtue of its engagement with transatlantically imported Greco-Roman material or its use of the Latin language. Indeed, often the very opposite is the case:<sup>68</sup> the Classics were widely and creatively deployed for all manner of alternative, even downright subversive, purposes. Nonetheless, for suspicions which are both understandable but also to a significant degree misplaced, Latin America's early modern 'Classics' is thus not widely studied or championed even in Latin Americanist circles either.

'Mainstream' classicists today are the inheritors of all these notions, which in practice translates into a blanket blind eye turned towards the Iberian world

67 The bibliography on the fate of the expelled Iberian Jesuits in Italy in the eighteenth century is extremely large: for orientation, see Niccolò Guasti, *L'esilio italiano dei gesuiti spagnoli: identità, controllo sociale e pratiche culturali, 1767–1798* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2006) or Ugo Baldini and Gian Paolo Brizzi, eds., *La presenza in Italia dei gesuiti iberici espulsi: aspetti religiosi, politici, culturali* (Bologna: CLUEB, 2010); also Laird, "Patriotism and the Rise of Latin".

68 On this, see, analogously, Andújar and Nikoloutsos, "Staging the European Classical", 11, summarizing ideas about 'the intersection of classical texts and colonialism' as formulated by reception studies scholar Lorna Hardwick: 'As she argues, classical texts undergo a double appropriation process: first they are appropriated to justify the purported cultural superiority of the imperial power, and then re-appropriated to show that the capacity to refigure texts ... is not confined to colonizers alone'.

in general, and to the Iberian Americas in particular.<sup>69</sup> This has corollaries across all spheres. For our purposes, most readers are for instance likely to have heard of Alexander Pope, eighteenth-century English translator of the *Iliad* (and author of a mock epic, the *Dunciad*, discussed by Goldwyn in his chapter), yet few will have come across our beleaguered Mexican classicist Francisco Javier Alegre or known that he too produced a complete translation of the *Iliad* in the same century – and in his case not from Greek into his vernacular but into Latin.<sup>70</sup> Likewise, most will be familiar with the work of Americanist fantasy that is Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) – or, to give it its full original Latin title, *De optimo rei publicae statu deque nova insula Utopia* ['On a republic's best state and on the new island of Utopia'] – but far fewer with eighteenth-century Paraguayan Jesuit missionary José Manuel Peramás's own quasi-utopianist attempt (subject of Michael Brumbaugh's chapter in this volume) to argue, also in Latin, that the missionary communities of Paraguay were the closest to the civic ideal of Plato that the world had ever seen: *De administratione guaranica comparate [sic] ad Rempublicam Platonis commentarius* ['A commentary on the governance of the Guaraní in comparison to Plato's *Republic*'] (1793). And even the reader who comes with prior interest in the Classics of the Americas is far more likely to know that Anglo-American Joel Barlow (another of the Hartford Wits also discussed by Goldwyn) produced an epic poem on Christopher Columbus in the 1780s – known as the *Vision of Columbus* in its first version of 1787, and as the *Columbiad* in its expanded 1807 iteration – than that the aforementioned Peramás had produced one a decade earlier after his twelve years in the Province of Paraguay.<sup>71</sup> Once one starts to drill down

69 Although arguably even more troubling – and certainly more insidious – is when this material *is* discussed but with implicit value judgements attaching, even inhering: in other words, when the material is invoked in a manner which appears to presuppose its second-class status and lower artistic quality, as assessed by rigged criteria with implicit biases running rampantly unchecked. The examples are many: see further discussion by Padilla Peralta in his chapter, with n. 12 there.

70 Alegre published his translation of Homer in Italy after he and his Jesuit *confrères* were exiled from the Americas in 1767: see n. 67 above. There is an edition from Bologna in 1776 and another from Rome in 1788. The title pages, with slight variation, read: *Francisci Xavierii Alegre Americani/Mexicani Veracrucensis Homeri Ilias latino carmine expressa* ['Homer's *Iliad*, rendered into Latin verse by Francisco Xavier Alegre, an American/Mexican from Veracruz']. See further Laird, *The Epic of America*, 26–8.

71 On Barlow's poem, see recently Craig Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil: 'Pessimistic' Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 169–195, or Philip Hardie, *The Last Trojan Hero: A Cultural History of Virgil's Aeneid* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), 168–70; on Peramás's, published in 1777, see Maya Feile Tomes, "News of a Hitherto Unknown Neo-Latin Columbus Epic" – Part I, Part II and Erratum & Addendum, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 22, no. 1 (2015), 22, no. 2 (2015), and 22, no. 3 (2015).

into the granular level of individual figures and tropes, the examples become more plentiful still. One will have to stand here for all: the *katabasis* (the set-piece literary descent into the underworld for a reckoning with the past – or future) in the 1770s Anglo-American poem discussed by Goldwyn in his chapter may indeed have been one of the earliest cases of *katabasis* to have been penned in the emergent U.S. Republic, with all the symbolic value and interpretative scope which that affords. However, on a whole-hemispheric view, it is no American 'first' by any means but rather preceded by all manner of Ibero-American counterparts dating as far back as the mid-sixteenth century, from famous examples like the episodes in the cave of the Chilean wizard Fitón in Alonso de Ercilla's *La Araucana* (Part II: 1578) to lesser-known – yet no less fascinating – instances such as the visit paid in Mexican poet José de Villerías y Roelas's epic *Guadalupe* (1724) to a Mesoamerican version of the god Atlas, resident in a subterranean lair beneath Lake Texcoco: the walls of his cavern are covered with murals – styled as pictograms or glyphs – surveying the legendary and imperial history of the 'Aztecs'.<sup>72</sup> These examples from sixteenth-century Chile, eighteenth-century Mexico, and the Early U.S. Republic would all bear, and surely benefit from, transhemispheric comparison, in turn enabling our understanding of the dynamics of this figure – and countless analogous cases – to be fleshed out and further theorized. By bringing such instances into dialogue, it will be possible to forge a more meaningful, textured sense of the contours of the phenomenon that is 'American' or 'transatlantic' early modern classical reception in transhemispheric, diachronic perspective.

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It is not a race, of course. It is most certainly not a race to be colonized earliest or receive European cultural imports the soonest. As stated at the outset, it is not to be seen as any virtue to receive Greco-Roman material first or indeed at all, and this volume offers (or hopes to offer) no value judgement,

72 Ercilla's major epic on the conquest of Chile was an early modern Iberian world best-seller, published in three instalments (1569, 1578, 1589); the episodes in which the hero visits Chilean wizard Fitón in his cavernous home at the foot of the Andes are in the middle instalment. Villerías's *Guadalupe* is a four-canto Latin-language epic; the episode in which 'Atlas' is visited in his cave is in Canto II. The *Guadalupe* was not published in its own day, but these days is available in Ignacio Osorio Romero, *El sueño criollo: José Antonio de Villerías y Roelas (1695–1728)* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1991); see further Andrew Laird "The *Aeneid* from the Aztecs to the Dark Virgin: Virgil, Native Tradition and Latin Poetry in Colonial Mexico from Sahagún's *Memoriales* to Villerías' *Guadalupe* (1724)", in *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*.

positive or negative, on the fact of coming into contact with classical material *per se*. However, while clearly the original enabling conditions for the transfer of Greco-Roman material to the Americas involved heinous colonialist behaviors that were contemptible and cruel, it would be a mistake to allow this to translate into equal condemnation of, or neglect towards, the resultant contact phenomena and arising cultural production. The irreducible fact is that Greco-Roman material *did* arrive on the western side of the Atlantic as a function of European colonialist actions of the early modern period in America (and beyond), where it took on a life or lives of its own: first in what became the Iberian Americas – both Caribbean and mainland – and subsequently across the rest of the Antilles and double continent. Indeed, as already suggested, one might even go so far as to say that it is one of the defining features of the ‘early modern’ American colonial experience on the literary-cultural and educational planes, and, as such, a transhemispheric unifying factor:<sup>73</sup> regardless of whether the invaders and colonizers were French, Spanish, British, Portuguese, Dutch, or otherwise, all areas in question received Greco-Roman material – along with teachers committed to imparting it, incomers accustomed to engaging with it, and local practitioners increasingly versed in it – to one degree or other, resulting in classical receptions from all four corners of the continent. Ignoring this is certainly no solution. Indeed, to *fail* to recognize this dimension of cultural production is a form of neocolonial violence in itself: the classic ‘double whammy’ manoeuvre whereby imported cultural frameworks are first unilaterally imposed upon unsuspecting parts of the world under circumstances of military and political imperialism (and moreover, in a further twist of the screw, cultural cachet becomes almost exclusively associated with the ability to manipulate that tradition, thereby further incentivizing engagement with it in the new contexts); and then, in a second (neo-)colonial blow, the cultural production arising as a result is deemed second-rate, irrelevant, and unworthy of entering the canon by these same – or subsequent – politically and culturally imperialist powers acting as the self-appointed gatekeepers of ‘high culture’. It thus fails to insert itself – or, more accurately, is prevented, *precluded*, from inserting itself – successfully into mainstream cultural narratives and so lapses into obscurity. Post- and decolonial thinkers often then do not strive to rehabilitate it either, feeling it too closely associated with the

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73 Again, the aim here is not to mask diversity or homogenize experience but rather to establish the broader shared context in which diversities and divergences may then emerge all the more sharply: as part of their recent critique of the category of the ‘Omni-American’ (see n. 16 above), Andújar and Nikoloutsos in “Staging the European Classical”, 7, have rightly signalled the problems with any easy notion of ‘the “American *experience*”, singular’ (emphasis original).

power structures and asymmetries of the colonial dynamic. However, as discussed, it would be a mistake to assume that all engagements with classical material under colonialism or in other *de facto* colonial contexts are by that very token complicit with or ideologically aligned with imperialisms; on the contrary, quite often the opposite is true, with the classical itself becoming a crucial site – and an idiom – of resistance. Indeed, it offers a means of doing so which, articulated in the imposing culture's own terms, may register all the more powerfully – and sting all the more.

For our purposes, the crucial point – and the reason for telling the foregoing story with its rehabilitative (over)emphasis on Ibero-America and its insistence on the relative chronology – is not to crow over who was 'first' but to re-calibrate sights and establish a clear basis for historically grounded comparative work here and hereafter. At present, global intellectual trends in general, and the way classical reception studies have been conducted in particular, have rendered the comparative perspective on Classics across the early Americas almost completely unavailable: it too has been effectively foreclosed. And yet, as we have by now abundantly stressed, it was a cross-continental, whole-hemispheric phenomenon: yet one which – unlike classical receptions in early modern Europe, of which the many modalities have been exhaustively compared and contrasted at cross-continental level – is never treated comparatively from a transregional perspective. This means, among other things, that it has so far been impossible to get a sense of how common or uncommon – productive or unproductive, problematic or unproblematic... and so on – particular phenomena may be or the degree to which thinkers have had recourse to (dis)similar ideas, texts and tropes under parallel circumstances across the American context. This may in turn lead to phenomena being decreed more rare or unusual than they in fact are,<sup>74</sup> and, conversely, to genuinely innovative strokes of inspiration being undervalued for true radicality and creativity. In general the cult of the unique literary *coup* leads scholars to dread the idea that a particular feature or phenomenon may prove to be more common than once thought, but this should not be feared: on the contrary – as with the examples of *katabasis* above – it allows a richer, more robust sense of the panorama to emerge. The real point, after all, is not how many such episodes one may tally but rather what they are being used to signify or thematize: what broader

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74 van der Woude, "Comparative Work", 619, makes a similar point regarding the perils of *non-comparative* scholarly endeavor: 'for those who have contemplated comparative work only to shy away from it, I think it is important to remember the risk of specializing in a single cultural formation, which is to read the products of that formation as singular – an approach that threatens to recapitulate exceptionalism'.

concerns do they speak to; what is being flagged for our attention? Folding out into the transhemispheric perspective thus offers a new comparative basis on which to reassess this material – one which, crucially, is not solely predicated on interpreting in relation to what was going on in the ‘Old World’, along the traditional ‘colony–metropole’ axes, but in relation to other parts of the same hemisphere: to other Americanisms; to other American classicisms.<sup>75</sup> The aim in so doing is, again, not to mobilize the blanket category of the homogenizing ‘Omni-American’ but to develop a comparatist framework for examining a context with great divergences and diversities but at the same time also many structural parallels: the nature of Americanisms in classicisms, under colonialism(s). Which classical phenomena proved most apt for articulating aspects of various American experiences, from newly negotiated, shifting identity categories to out-and-out revolution and everything in between? Are there meaningful commonalities or repetitions – or striking differences – that can be usefully identified and theorized? What picture of American classicality actually emerges – a cross-continental picture of which we do not yet have even have the broadest brushstrokes sense, let alone a fine-grained one? We are interested, then, not in sameness but parallels; not in homogenization but comparatism.

### 3 What Follows and Next Steps

This collection offers a fourteen-chapter window onto a vast, multi-century literary-cultural field which could be the subject of many volumes more. It has pretensions neither to exhaustivity nor comprehensiveness, offering just one possible cross-section of America’s manifold classicisms: one sample across which to begin to draw comparative lines. It affords, for instance, opportunities to compare how classical lenses were used to process the American experiences of European Jesuit missionaries at opposite ends of the continent in their interactions with peoples as diverse as the Haudenosaunee and the Guaraní (on which see the chapters of Michael Brumbaugh, Zachary Yuzwa, and William M. Barton & Jean-Nicolas Mailloux); to analyze recourse to Ovidian modes as ways of voicing non-normative experiences from enslavement to surrealist counter-canoncity in Anglo- and Ibero-America (on which see the contributions of Nicole Spigner, Connie Bloomfield-Gadêlha, and Joanne

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75 For use of this term (and compound forms), see, e.g., Andújar and Nikoloutsos, “Staging the European Classical”, 8, or the Postclassicisms Collective’s *Postclassicisms* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2019).



van der Woude); to register, and to theorize, the obsession with constructing elaborate 'classical' genealogies and venerable 'antique' origins – *fake* ones – in times of emergent nationhood from the eighteenth-century U.S. Republic to nineteenth-century Brazil (on which see again Bloomfield-Gadêlha, together with Goldwyn); to see Latin in use from New Spain to New France to Barbados (on which Andrew Laird, David Lupher, Barton & Mailloux, and John Gilmore) and observe the activities of literary academies founded in the European image from Lima to Connecticut (on which van der Woude and Goldwyn); to be confronted with racisms – and the reflexes thereof – from Santo Domingo to New England (Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Spigner, and Duquès); or to consider satire – classical genre *par excellence* – as one of the possible responses to the manifold challenges of the colonial context (on which Artur Costrino and, again, Padilla Peralta). This attempt to draw out common threads from the volume could go on: the reader will spot many others. Bringing classical receptions from across the early modern American double continent and Caribbean into dialogue with one another in transhemispheric perspective in this way will thus also allow an energising sense of the value of this line of inquiry to emerge: a comparative platform, a clearer chronology, and – while by no means an unqualified diminishment – certainly a relativization of the importance of areas and aspects which have until now been allowed to dominate the field unchecked. This newly calibrated sense can in turn be fed into, and used to nuance, prevailing narratives and trends in global classical reception studies as a whole.

Indeed, the wildly fluctuating nature of the territory and its gridlines throughout the period in question means that in many respects it makes little sense to come at this matter from anything *other than* the transhemispheric angle.<sup>76</sup> The way the continent is geopolitically sliced today is not as it always was, and likely not as it always will be (as all wallbuilders would do well to recall):<sup>77</sup> its territories have been ceaselessly demarcated and contested, carved and re-carved. The boundaries in question, then, were highly mutable

76 Andújar and Nikoloutsos, "Staging the European Classical", 1, are also interested in 'the complex transhistorical and transnational routes and frameworks for the transmission and understanding of Graeco-Roman texts, myths and ideas in ... Latin America' (the word I have elided is 'modern') and likewise in investigating the extent to which the 'debates and concerns' that have exercised cultural producers across the region are 'trans-historic and transnational' (8). See also recently Gibson, *El Norte*, on the value in drawing 'longer hemispheric connections, from Canada to the tip of Chile' (3). For another recent attempt to cut across some of the usual scholarly lines, see Mander *et al.*, eds., *Transnational Perspectives*.

77 Ricardo Padrón has recently made a similar point in *The Indies of the Setting Sun*, noting 'just how malleable the world was to C16th Europeans and thereby reminding us of how

throughout the period in question: even the *Línea de Tordesillas* – once again standing synecdochically for all such geopolitical lines – was shunted endlessly back and forth.<sup>78</sup> As a result, large stretches of territory – and, in the case of the Caribbean, entire islands – changed occupying hands many times over as borders waxed and waned under regional and supraregional pressures over the course of the turbulent colonial and post-colonial (neo-imperialist?) periods. The Guaraní area which is the subject of Brumbaugh's chapter, for instance, was the site of extensive Spanish–Portuguese and intra-Guaraní disputes at the interface of modern-day Brazil and its Spanish-speaking southerly neighbors; Barbados – subject of Gilmore's chapter – had multiple European claims exerted over it before it settled as 'British', while the island of Hispaniola – of which the (now) Dominican half is the subject of Padilla Peralta's – has had its own turbulences and today shares its island space with modern-day Haiti. Meanwhile, streams of British, French, Dutch, and many other European incomers vied with one another across the northern half of the American double continent, as well as in the Caribbean and Guianas. Perhaps most crucially for our purposes and for our rehabilitative emphasis on the 'Iberian' Americas, much of what today falls within the boundaries of the U.S.A. was for a long time Spanish-controlled, including much of the states of California, New Mexico, Texas, Nevada, and Arizona, as well as parts of Florida and beyond. Carrie Gibson has recently rearticulated this corrective to constructions of American history in her 2019 book, *El Norte: The Epic and Forgotten History of Hispanic North America*,<sup>79</sup> and it is a key consideration here, too. In short, to come at the matter in terms of current nation-state boundaries or other modern-day divisions is, if all but the most hyper-vigilant caution is not exercised, to risk swiftly slipping into anachronism: the shape of things used to be very different from the one reflected by geopolitical maps today, and even familiar terms like 'Peru' or 'Paraguay' are misleading when the colonial vice-royalty and province of those names (respectively) covered much larger areas than their current namesake nation states, denoting once integrated zones now sliced apart by scholarship interested in modern republican territories and emergent 'national' identities.

Coming at the question from a transhemispheric angle thus helps to avert at least some of the worst pitfalls of anachronism in this regard, offering one

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malleable it continues to be today' (3), thus also 'liberating us to imagine how it might be remapped in years to come' (24).

78 See recently Wilson-Lee, *Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books*, e.g., 242–52.

79 See n. 45 and n. 76 above. For more on the Hispanic history of North America, see also Felipe Fernández-Armesto, *Our America: A Hispanic History of the United States* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014).

possible way of making sense of a space which has been drawn at different times along so many different lines. Our volume aims in its distribution of chapters to span the whole region, covering a geographical spread unconstrained by modern-day national or linguistic separations. As already stated, it does not aspire to be comprehensive: no edited collection can be; though it does at least hope to be broadly *representative*, sampling widely from across the continent and Caribbean in a manner designed to reflect the acreage, proportions, and populations of the Americas. It thus contains four chapters on continental South America, two on the Caribbean, one on Mexico and another bridging from Mesoamerica to Anglo-America; then a further four from areas falling within the modern-day U.S.A., and a final culminatory pair devoted to zones within what is now Canada. The material we discuss includes texts composed in English, Spanish, Portuguese, French, and, of course, Latin, which, as we have said, was one of the common denominators of the early modern American literary-cultural experience. Many other possible languages and contexts could also have been included: we regret, for instance, that we have not been able to offer a study of Classics in New Netherland or other Dutch-controlled areas. Chronologically, we span from the mid-sixteenth century (Andrew Laird on early colonial Mexico) to the nineteenth (Matthew Duquès on William Apess from the Early U.S. Republic and Connie Bloomfield-Gadêlha on the so-called '*Império do Brasil*' era when, though independence had been declared, separatist Portuguese monarchs still ruled Brazil from Rio de Janeiro). Again, gaps remain: to take the Brazilian case alone, the focus in our pair of Brazilian chapters on the seventeenth and then later nineteenth centuries could usefully have been complemented and indeed bridged by attention to the so-called 'Arcadian period' (ca. 1760–1820) that flourished around Minas Gerais with its clutch of intensely neoclassical authors.<sup>80</sup> Others will plug these gaps.

Our chosen cultural field is the literary, with a focus on both the prose and – perhaps above all – poetic genres: this is not a volume on visual or material culture,<sup>81</sup> and even within the literary genres alone we barely scratch the surface. Drama is perhaps our most obvious omission. On the one hand,

80 This topic is presently being investigated by scholars including Adriana Vázquez. See further her other recent work, e.g., "The Cruellest Harvest: Virgilian Agricultural Pessimism in the Poetry of the Brazilian Colonial Period", *Classical Receptions Journal* 12, no. 4 (2020), 445–69.

81 A clutch of studies of the visual-cultural dimension already exists – some listed in n. 44 above – with more surely yet to come. See also the recent work of Gauvin Alexander Bailey on the influence of Classical Chinese visual culture in the colonial Americas, e.g., "The Jesuits and Chinese Style in the Arts of Colonial Brazil (1719–79)", in *Cultural Worlds of the Jesuits*, 11–40.

this is because major work in this area has been simultaneously underway in other quarters, led by scholars expert in that field: see most recently Rosa Andújar and Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos's new collection, *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage* (2020);<sup>82</sup> the editors' introduction there provides a useful counterpoint to this one.<sup>83</sup> At the same time, the material considered in Andújar and Nikoloutsos's collection is almost all modern, often extremely so.<sup>84</sup> The fact of the matter here is that the history of drama in earlier Ibero-America – as with that from other parts of the early modern Americas – remains to be written, which in turn constitutes the second reason for our bracketing of dramatic material here: there is still so much to ground-work be laid that it would have done a disservice to the rich complexity of the field to consign it to a mere chapter or two. A fuller such history most certainly could be written, however:<sup>85</sup> to continue on the Latin American theme, a comprehensive account of early modern Ibero-American theatre will wish to cover everything from the mythological dramas of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1648–95) or the neoclassical works of playwrights like Pedro Peralta y Barnuevo (1663–1743) in Peru and Juan Cruz Varela (1794–1839) in Argentina to more popular forms of performance held at the exuberant festivals in towns such as Potosí – in modern-day Bolivia – or erstwhile Vila Rica (now Ouro Preto, in Brazil), not forgetting of course the lively dramatic stages of the colonial-era

82 In addition to *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage*, see now also Rosa Andújar's yet more recent *The Greek Trilogy of Luis Alfaro* (London: Methuen, 2021). In general, see Bosher *et al.*, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas*.

83 Rosa Andújar and Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos's collection, *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage*, was published while this volume was undergoing its peer review process. I have been heartened to find that we make several similar points, as will be evident from the notes above, at the same time as, naturally, not necessarily concurring in all particulars. Still more recently, Germán Campos Muñoz' *The Classics in South America* appeared in print just as this volume was going to press: we regret that we have not had the opportunity to engage with it here.

84 See n. 51 and n. 76 above.

85 Andújar and Nikoloutsos, "Staging the European Classical", 10–11, offer a whistlestop paragraph of C17th and C18th examples which could do with teasing out in just such a history. On the earlier Mexican context, see also Francisco Barrenechea, "Greek Tragedy in Mexico", in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas*; on Argentinian playwright Juan Cruz Varela (1794–1839), see, e.g., Moira Fradinger, "An Argentine Tradition", in *Antigone on the Contemporary World Stage*, eds. Erin B. Mee and Helene P. Foley (Oxford: OUP, 2011), and most recently Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos, "From Epic to Tragedy: Theatre and Politics in Juan Cruz Varela's *Dido*", in *Greeks and Romans on the Latin American Stage*. See also Guibovich Pérez, "Readers and Reading", 187, on the enormous popularity – among the reading public, at least – of three-act plays illegally imported from the Iberian Peninsula. Spanish playwright Lope de Vega was wildly popular in Peru in particular: see Aurelio Miró Quesada, *Lope de Vega y el Perú* (Lima, n.p.: 1962).

Jesuit schools, whose activities in the Iberian Americas antedate 1767 by definition and stretch back to the mid-late sixteenth century. Earlier still, Franciscan missionaries in Mexico used indigenous actors to stage a production of the Siege of Jerusalem in Tlaxcala in 1539, less than two short decades since the Siege of Tenochtitlan itself: talk about the performance of conquest!<sup>86</sup> Clearly a fascinating study of this and much other material awaits and we record here the hope that enthused scholars will rise to the challenge and attempt such an investigation. Similar procedures could likewise be undertaken for other areas across the hemisphere – drama was of notable importance for instance also in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Québec, again especially in the school context – and a fecund field of further comparatism would in turn then await.

Meanwhile, our surfeit of contributions on poetry has meant that a number of important prose genres are inevitably also missing, perhaps most notably the novel: again, a promising study could be produced here and work in this field is gathering pace at present, yielding evidence of novelistic engagement in contexts ranging again from the earlier Ibero-American – where the presence of Apuleius is especially palpable<sup>87</sup> – to the nineteenth-century *québécois*, where receptions of the Greco-Roman novel enjoyed particular prominence.<sup>88</sup> We would have liked to include these and many other things, but ultimately remain hostage not just to the linear constraints to which I refer at the end but to the pressure of reasonable book length. We can only hope, then, to sample representatively across time and place, covering certain key bases and giving an impression – if a dappled one – of the lie of the land. At the same time,

86 See Lisa Voigt, "Spectacular Wealth: Baroque Festivals and Creole Consciousness in Colonial Mining Towns of Brazil and Peru", in *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas*. On the Jesuit school stage, see Christiane Pérez González, *Bilingualität auf der Jesuitenbühne. Latein und Volkssprache im spanischen Schultheater des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: Rhema, 2014) for the Peninsular Spanish context: an equivalent study remains to be – and could do with being – written for the Americas, especially the Iberian Americas. For context, see, e.g., Ignacio Osorio Romero, *Colegios y profesores jesuitas que enseñaron latín*, and the introduction to *El sueño criollo*. For the Franciscans, see Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista*.

87 See Andrew Laird's recent chapter, "The White Goddess in Mexico: Apuleius, Isis and the Virgin of Guadalupe in Latin, Spanish and Nahuatl Sources", in *The Afterlife of Apuleius*, eds. Florence Bistagne, Carole Boidin, and Raphaële Mouren (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2020), along with his "Les *Métamorphoses* et le métissage religieux. L'influence d'Apulée dans l'écriture latine, espagnole et nahuatl 1540–1680", in *La réception de l'ancien roman de la fin du moyen âge au début de l'époque classique*, eds. Cécile Bost-Pouderon and Bernard Pouderon (Paris: Beauchesne, 2015). See also Laird, *The Epic of America*, 45, 272–3.

88 See, for instance, Irena Trujic, "Pélagie-La-Charrette d'Antonine Maillet: une odyssée a(r)cadinene", in *Les Classiques aux Amériques*.

however, our volume does not aim solely to be representative but, wherever possible, also *unrepresentative*:<sup>89</sup> or rather representative – representing – of a different slice of things from the standard. It thus deliberately lingers on less familiar corners from Baní to Georgian Bay, on thinking~writing subjects other than the usual (white and/or male and/or elite) ones, and on topics from motherhood to menstruation. We thus do not strive to be purely ‘representative’ in the first place.

Lastly, establishing a comparative platform serves a critical further purpose: for the aim in developing a clearer sense of the complexion of the field of early modern American classical receptions, with a more proportionate, relativized sense of the roles of different parts of the Americas in that story, is not only to raise awareness but to *reduce* the problem of exoticization which has traditionally dogged the area – especially, as ever, in the Ibero-American context in particular.<sup>90</sup> This is key from a post- and decolonial perspective in terms of the ethics of interpretation and the burden of awareness and responsibility to be informed. At present, there is still a widespread tendency in the scholarship – a function of the (perceived) novelty of the area, but already quickly calcifying into a set of tired scholarly tropes – to express surprise (or, worse, *faux-surprise*) at the existence of the classical engagements in question: to exclaim excitably over how weird and wonderful it is to find classical materials being read and composed in the tropical heat of Brazil or the heights of the Andes, amid speakers of Tupí or Aymara and surrounded by tapirs and llamas. Or with teeth chattering in the great forests of Canada. Or on ships ploughing unprecedented transoceanic routes. In other words: to exoticize. But to express – or indeed genuinely to experience – this kind of surprise is problematic. After all, how weird and wonderful is it really? Classics did not come to the Americas by magic or osmosis: it arrived – *was imposed* – under perfectly fathomable, well-known and well-documented historical circumstances: of conquest, colonization, and the colonial order, as part of early modern European global expansionism and imperialism which rolled its Classics-centric educational and cultural edifices out across the world with it;

89 As Spivak says, one should be equally if not more interested in those cultural producers who are ‘*unlike* [their] scene’ (emphasis added): ‘in writers who are against the current, against the mainstream’. She goes on: ‘I remain convinced that the interesting literary text might be precisely the text where you do not learn what the majority view of majority cultural representation or self-representation ... might be’ (*The Politics of Translation*, 320).

90 For further discussion, see Maya Feile Tomes, review of Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller, eds., *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America* (Chichester: Wiley/SLAS, 2018), *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 20 December 2019: <https://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2019/2019.12.40> (last accessed 24 November 2020).

in other words, the familiar yoking of *translatio imperii* and *translatio studii* on which so much ink has been spilled.<sup>91</sup> As such, 'Classics' spread to wherever the long arm of European imperialisms reached, which in the case of America means everywhere from the Gulf of Mexico to Massachusetts Bay, Quito to Québec – and this should *not* come as a surprise. On the contrary, there is a postcolonial ethical imperative to be *unsurprised*: to be, at barest minimum, informed of the existence of this material from early modern American spaces and the reasons behind its presence there – which is also to be aware of the unbidden, coercive circumstances of its arrival and of the formidable power imbalances in its production, distribution, and subsequent fate – which in turn is the condition of possibility for being in a position to engage with it. In other words, the dissemination and interactions of classical material under circumstances of European-imposed colonialism is something in which the responsible classicist – even the one who professes no particular interest for 'reception studies' – certainly ought to be interested. As Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra puts it – with deeply ironic understatement – in the context of his work on Ibero-American Classics, scholars could 'benefit from becoming curious'<sup>92</sup> about the classical traditions of the Americas. One should make it one's business, then, to be – if not precisely unfazed, for the aim is not to desensitize to the intensity of the problematics or the stakes of the feats involved<sup>93</sup> – then at least informed: to know that, and how and why, there are Latin epic poems from Colombia and Connecticut as well as Perugia or Paris, and early modern editions of classical texts sitting still today in the libraries of Arequipa or Córdoba del Tucumán.<sup>94</sup>

This becomes all the more pressing in the context of the current long overdue efforts towards decolonization in academia in general and, increasingly, in Classics in particular.<sup>95</sup> Scholars are called upon to be more critically and

91 Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil*, 1–16, is a helpful introduction.

92 Cañizares-Esguerra in <https://notevenpast.org/whose-classical-traditions/> (last accessed 24 November 2020) – an earlier version of the piece which subsequently became his *Envoi to Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America* (n. 42 above).

93 For brilliant analysis of the place of 'wonder' and amazement in this context, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

94 See for instance the catalogue of the Jesuit library at Córdoba del Tucumán (in modern-day Argentina): Alfredo E. Fraschini and Luis Á. Sánchez, eds., *Index Librorum Bibliothecae Collegii Maximi Cordubensis Societatis Jesu Anno 1757* (Córdoba: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 2005). Many of these library catalogues can now also be searched online.

95 See, for instance, Routledge's new "Classics and the Postcolonial" book series, edited by Rosa Andújar and Justine McConnell. Earlier, see Barbara Goff, ed., *Classics and Colonialism* (London: Duckworth, 2005). On whether or not Latin America can be usefully

responsibly cognizant of the global trends in which classical-cultural materials and thought patterns have participated across the ages and the ways in which 'Classics' may have contributed to them, especially in contexts where it or its legacies can still be seen to interact with or perpetuate structures of discrimination, oppression, and other imbalances caused by the enormous wealth and power differentials with which the twenty-first-century world continues to be riven; and to acknowledge, reflect, and reflect upon this in their – our – scholarship and other activities. (Meanwhile, the world races on and wonders why classicists are still only just talking about the postcolonial.) As part of this, it is key to acknowledge that the widespread failure to attend to marginalized, *but themselves not marginal*, contexts like the Ibero-American or of certain societal groups is not just accidental – the chance product of individual scholars' research interests and aesthetic preferences which just so happen not to encompass (which just so happen *never* to encompass...) them – but rather something of a structural–systemic order: which in turn underscores the need to interrogate our disciplinary lines and decolonize. To continue to be surprised – for surprise, as is well known, is a privilege and itself political – is to fail to attend to these dynamics of conquest, colonization, and colonialism which plotted their lines inexorably across the early modern world and remain inscribed across the globe today. Indeed, as mentioned above, to ignore this material is a form of fresh neocolonialist violence: the (neo)colonial double blow whereby one first imports and imposes a cultural edifice, then ignores (or categorizes as second-rate) the cultural products and contact phenomena which emerge in that context as a result. It is imperative to understand why – and that – Classics belongs to America, too, and has done for the past five hundred years and counting: neither a novelty nor exoticizable and inexplicable but a function of colonial enterprises which often had Eurocentric classical thought patterns in their own genesis and self-justification, yet which went on to take on a life or lives of its own in the new American context and spectacularly to outgrow the ultimately reductive question of its imperial origins. The gridlines which have served to keep large swathes – and population sectors – of the Americas at bay in scholarly consciousness as well as isolated from one another must be dissolved.

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considered a 'postcolonial' region, see Andújar and Nikoloutsos, "Staging the European Classical", 1, 3–5.



#### 4 Last Word

This book, like all its brethren bar those of the highest creative conceit and production values, is of course ultimately still beholden to linearity of a different kind:<sup>96</sup> the sequential nature of narrative – and of bookbinding – and the need to organize in a consecutive fashion, which in practical terms means putting chapters in one or other order. Sixteenth-century *conquistador* Bernal Díaz del Castillo (ca. 1495, Spain – 1584, Guatemala), one of the earliest European minds to engage in classical~American comparatism in his famous account of the Conquest of Mexico,<sup>97</sup> himself grappled with the problem of narrative linearity, remarking defensively that, ‘... en un tiempo acaecen dos o tres cosas, y por fuerza hemos de hablar de una’ [‘two or three things occur at once and yet perforce only one can be dealt with at any given time’].<sup>98</sup> Our chapters too have many overlappings, synergies, and simultaneities and we would like to offer them all simultaneously without setting up a hierarchy of priority of any kind. Ordering is always a thorny business: here we have in the end opted to cleave to the contours of the continent itself, and so our volume obeys a broadly geographical principle of organization. Just as Shane Butler in his introduction to *Deep Classics* (2016) opens with an invitation to turn the book on its side and conceive of it as geological layers or archaeological strata,<sup>99</sup> we invite the reader contemplating our volume from the sides to imagine it as a compressed map of the western hemisphere, with the closed pages corresponding to the latitude and longitude lines – lines, again – that span the continent. Thus the chapters on Mesoamerica and the Caribbean occupy roughly the central portion of the volume, from which those corresponding to the northern half of the landmass radiate out one way and those on southern portion the other. Flipping back and forth between the chapters thus becomes a journey up and down the continent. This also has the effect of placing the chapters on the Iberian Americas first in the volume, corresponding on the one hand to historical reality insofar as Ibero-America(-to-be)’s encounter with Classics

96 On the ‘linearization problem’ of rendering into words, see Don Fowler, “Narrate and Describe”, in *Roman Constructions: Readings in Postmodern Latin* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), 72–4; or, as Borges puts it, ‘Lo que vieron mis ojos fue simultáneo: lo que transcribiré, sucesivo, porque el lenguaje lo es’ [‘What my eyes saw was simultaneous: what I shall commit to paper shall be sequential, for language is sequential’] (Jorge Luis Borges, *El Aleph*, New York: Vintage Español, 2012, 205).

97 See Lupher, *Romans in a New World*, 1–19, 32–42.

98 Bernal Díaz del Castillo, *Historia de la verdadera conquista de la Nueva España*, ed. Alberto Rivas Yanes (Barcelona: Castalia, 2019), 99, with n. 96 above.

99 Shane Butler, “Introduction: On the Origin of ‘Deep Classics’”, in *Deep Classics*, 1–2.

indeed enjoyed temporal primacy – thus also, to mix our metaphors, lending our book-on-its-side a degree of time-depth (although, we stress, the material in this volume is not chronologically arranged overall) – as well as, more importantly, serving to invert the traditional Anglo-Saxon scholarly modus which has long had Ibero-America in second place. At the same time, we hope that the geographical ordering represents one of the more dispassionate of the options available to us: we mirror the lie of the land, which – unlike any humanly imposed borderlines – is at least rooted in terrestrial reality. What is *not* rooted in any external reality, of course, is the way in which the map, or globe, or book, is to be held or viewed: as with the planet itself, there is no ‘right way up’, and so, needless to say, the chapters may be read in any order. Far more interesting than any possible sequence or organizing principle, after all, is what emerges from the dialogue, and indeed interstices, between them: the web of interactions, axes of correspondence, and lines of (dis)continuity spun between the chapters and volume as a whole, in turn cutting across some of the others – linguistic, geopolitical, disciplinary – which have conspired to keep this material apart. We may live in a world of lines, but at least they can be crossed.<sup>100</sup>

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100 This introduction was first drafted in early 2020, when talk of North American walls and, in Europe, of ‘Brexit’ and its borders was much on the mind. Since then 2020 has taken an altogether different turn and the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has, in its own way, served to confirm not only that lines can be crossed but that some things know no borders at all. (At the same time, actual territorial borders have been closed and people confined to their own four walls.) Aware that notes like this are doomed to become dated, yet also of the importance of being situated, I end by registering the very different circumstances under which this introduction was first composed, then later revised – which were also those with which our valiant contributors contended during the final stages of the project – and by recording the hope that being so sharply reminded of the basic borderlessness and porosity of our shared global ecology will prove somehow salutary in its own way. MFT, December 2020.

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# Utopia Writes Back: José Manuel Peramás on the Limits of Republicanism

*Michael Brumbaugh*

Catalan Jesuit José Manuel Peramás (1732–93) spent the end of his life in exile in Italy, where he wrote voluminously in defence of the activities that his religious order – the Society of Jesus – had carried out in Paraguay from 1609–1767.<sup>1</sup> In March 1793, just two months before his death, he completed an extensive study of the indigenous Guaraní of Paraguay, which measured their civic practices and institutions in the Jesuit missionary communities or *reducciones* against an idealized Platonic state cobbled together from details found in the *Republic* and the *Laws*. While its title may have an esoteric and sober ring, *De Administratione Guaranica Comparet ad Rempublicam Platonis Commentarius* (“A Commentary on the Way of Life of the Guaraní Compared to Plato’s *Republic*”) offers a trenchant commentary on the nature and limits of the republican form of government in an effort to present American lessons that might save Europe from its quixotic pursuit of revolution. For Peramás, classical antiquity was not a distant object of study, but rather the very fabric of contemporary intellectual discourse and a cornerstone of European ideological self-fashioning.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, his years spent living in the Americas, and in particular in the Guaraní *reducción* of San Ignacio Mini, set him apart from other European chroniclers of Paraguay, few of whom crossed the Atlantic let alone ventured deep into the interior and away from the colonial capitals. In

1 Thanks are due to audiences at the Universidad de los Andes, the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, University of Maryland, College Park, the Ohio State University, and UCLA who provided feedback on earlier stages of this project.

2 While the impact of classical learning on early modern Europe has long been recognized, our understanding of the purposes to which it was put in colonial contexts remains at a formative stage. As scholars continually revise their conceptual models for understanding the complex interactions between cultures, particularly in the face of staggering power differentials, new insights become available for thinking about the dynamic interactions at play in places like the Guaraní *reducciones* of Paraguay. The title of this chapter recalls some important contributions to the discourse on post-colonial readings of literature such as Salman Rushdie, “The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance”, *London Times* (London), July 3, 1982 and Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds., *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2002).

writing *De Administratione Guaranica* (DAG hereafter), Peramás brings his own experience living among the Guaraní to bear on a longstanding European discourse in which Paraguay was an exotic and abstract other, a Foucauldian heterotopia,<sup>3</sup> no more real than Plato's Kallipolis/Magnesia or Thomas More's Utopia.

This chapter traces the development of that discourse, demonstrating how the conflation of the Americas with an idealized ancient Greek polity provided the basis for Peramás's own project. In particular, I show how writers such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Diderot developed a conceptual equivalency between Paraguay and ancient Sparta that rapidly gained currency in Europe and endured throughout the eighteenth century. Although the terms of this equation shifted over time, it became a commonplace in European thought. Remote and inaccessible even to those living along the coastal regions of South America, Paraguay nonetheless had tremendous purchase on the European and American imagination throughout the early modern period. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the image of "Paraguay" transmitted around the world was marred by distortion. Likewise, familiarity with the ancient Greeks was often fragmentary and superficial as it generally derived from excerpts rather than careful engagement with complete texts.<sup>4</sup> Reacting against accounts that played fast and loose with the evidence both from America and antiquity, Peramás put this political metaphor to the test. By replacing Sparta with Plato's imaginary republic, long thought to have been modeled on the renowned Peloponnesian polis,<sup>5</sup> the author set the America-antiquity conflation within the broader sphere of early modern political discourse.

Within this comparison of Old and New World political models, Peramás targets the *philosophes*, public intellectuals in Europe, whom he saw as a dangerous force threatening to destabilize society. Bolstered by a vast array of ancient authorities, he methodically peels back the classical veneer the *philosophes* used to dress up the republicanism they advocated instituting. His study

3 M. Foucault, "Des Espaces Autres", *Architecture Mouvement Continuité* 5 (1984), 46–49.

4 While complete text editions were available in Greek and in translation, excerpt books had much wider circulation throughout the early modern period. See Anthony Grafton, "Les lieux communs chez les humanistes", in *Lire, copier, écrire: les bibliothèques manuscrites et leurs usages au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. Elisabeth Décultot (Paris: CNRS, 2003) and Efterpi Mitsi, "Greece 'digested in a play': Consuming Greek Heroism in *The School of Abuse* and *Troilus and Cressida*", in *Shakespeare and Greece*, ed. Alison Findlay and Vassiliki Markidou (Arden: Bloomsbury, 2017).

5 E.g., Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois* VII.16.2. Fritz-Gregor Hermann, "Spartan Echoes in Plato's Republic", in *The Greek Superpower: Sparta in the Self-Definitions of Athenians*, eds. Paul Cartledge and Anton Powell (Swansea: The Classical Press of Wales, 2018), provides a useful treatment of the conflation from antiquity to the present.

reveals that even the best republic falls short of Plato's system of government and indicates that ill-conceived attempts to transform entrenched European states into egalitarian republics would meet with even less success. Peramás's rhetorically charged treatise is meant to check burgeoning republican fervor in France, where he feared that the gap between ideology and reality was so great that the nascent revolution would plunge all Europe into chaos. Unlike many European authors who filtered America through a Greco-Roman lens, Peramás effectively inverts the paradigm by using America as a means of critiquing classicizing political thought. In this way, he endeavors to let the Guaraní "utopia" respond to the European fantasy projected onto it.

## 1 Peramás and His Project

Born in 1732 in Catalonia, Peramás studied Latin in Manresa and philosophy in Zaragoza before pursuing more advanced studies at the recently founded university in Cervera. There, Peramás studied under renowned Spanish humanist José Finestres, through whom he was exposed to a range of progressive humanists and theologians; Peramás excelled at the university and his language skills earned him a position teaching Latin.<sup>6</sup> After requesting and obtaining permission to become a missionary in Paraguay, the twenty-three year old was sent to Córdoba (in present-day Argentina), where he studied theology and had the responsibility of composing the *Litterae Annuae* – the Jesuits' annual reports – for the Province of Paraguay.<sup>7</sup> Following his ordination as a priest in 1758, Peramás took up residence at the *reducción* of San Ignacio Miní, a Guaraní community deep within the tropical forest, alongside the Paraná River (on the modern-day Argentinian–Paraguayan border). After spending three years as one of two Jesuits living in a community of 3,300 Guaraní, he

6 On the intellectual environment in Cervera, see Miguel Batllori, *Evolución pedagógica de la Universidad de Cervera en el siglo XVIII* (Barcelona: Universidad de Barcelona, 1984). Details of Peramás's biography are drawn from the *Vitae Synopsis* appended to the posthumous volume containing the *DAG*; see further discussion of his life in Guillermo Furlong Cardiff, *José Manuel Peramás y su Diario del destierro, 1768* (Buenos Aires: Librería del Plata, 1952), Stelio Cro, "El Padre Peramás y su Guaranica", in *Rumbos del hispanismo en el umbral del Cincuentenario de la AIH: Historia*, ed. Luigi Guarnieri Calò Carducci (Rome: Bagatto Libri, 2010), 184, and Desiree Arbo, "The Uses of Classical Learning in the Río de la Plata, c. 1750–1815" (PhD University of Warwick, 2016), 35–36.

7 Produced in every Jesuit outpost around the world, the publication and circulation of these letters served as the backbone of the Order's vast communication network; see Markus Friedrich, "Circulating and Compiling the *Litterae Annuae*. Towards a History of the Jesuit System of Communication", *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 77 (2008).

was recalled to Córdoba where he took up a post as professor of Rhetoric and later Moral Theology. Peramás was on his way to becoming one of America's leading humanist scholars and in 1766 used the newly installed printing press in Córdoba to publish *Laudationes Quinque* ("Five Speeches of Praise"), the first book printed in Argentina.<sup>8</sup>

This trajectory was interrupted the following year when the Spanish Crown expelled the Jesuits from America. Peramás, along with those of his brethren who survived the forced march to the American coast and drawn-out Atlantic crossing,<sup>9</sup> was relocated to Faenza in the Papal States, a territory spanning much of what is now central Italy. Within four years, Pope Clement XIV succumbed to pressure in Europe and issued the Papal Brief *Dominus ac Redemptor* (1773), which officially suppressed the Jesuit Order.<sup>10</sup> Peramás spent the remaining twenty-five years of his life in Faenza chiefly engaged in his writing. His most important works include *De Invento Novo Orbe* ("On the Discovery of the New World", 1777), a lengthy epic on Columbus's transatlantic voyage of 1492,<sup>11</sup> and two biographical volumes celebrating the Jesuits of Paraguay: *De Vita et Moribus Sex Sacerdotum Paraguaycorum* ("On the Life of Six Paraguayan Priests", 1791) and *De Vita et Moribus Tredecim Virorum Paraguaycorum* ("On the Life and Customs of Thirteen Paraguayan Men", 1793).

Peramás's second volume of *vitae* recorded the lives of thirteen Jesuit scholars, priests, and lay-clergy who distinguished themselves in Paraguay. This book generally resembled the one he had published two years earlier, in which he

8 See Marcela Alejandra Suárez, "Antiquorum exempla: memoria poética y retórica en las *Laudationes Quinque* del P. Peramás", *Bibliographica Americana* 1 (2004) and Marcela Alejandra Suárez, *José Manuel Peramás – Laudationes Quinque: Cinco alabanzas al ilustre Sr. Dr. Ignacio Duarte Quirós* (Buenos Aires: Biblioteca de la Nación Argentina, 2005).

9 Peramás described the journey in his diaries; see Furlong Cardiff, *José Manuel Peramás y su Diario del destierro*, 1768.

10 For more detail on the context of the suppression, see Jeffrey D. Burson and Jonathan Wright, eds., *The Jesuit Suppression in Global Context: Causes, Events, and Consequences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

11 Maya Feile Tómes, "News of a Hitherto Unknown Neo-Latin Columbus Epic – Part I: José Manuel Peramás's *De Invento Novo Orbe Inductoque Illuc Christi Sacrificio* (1777)", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 22, no. 1 (2015); "News of a Hitherto Unknown Neo-Latin Columbus Epic – Part II: José Manuel Peramás's *De Invento Novo Orbe Inductoque Illuc Christi Sacrificio* (1777)", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 22, no. 2 (2015); "Further Points on Peramás: An Erratum and two Addenda", *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 22, no. 3 (2015); "Neo-Latin America: the poetics of the 'New World' in early modern epic. Studies in José Manuel Peramás's *De Invento Novo Orbe Inductoque Illuc Christi Sacrificio* (Faenza 1777)" (PhD, University of Cambridge, 2018). An edition of Peramás's *De Invento Novo Orbe* is currently in preparation by Maya Feile Tómes and Bram van der Velden.

had chronicled the lives of six such priests of Paraguay. To this second volume, however, Peramás added a study comparing the way of life in the Guaraní communities with the *Republic* and *Laws* of Plato. Although described as merely a “forerunner” (*prodromus*, DAG 2) to the *vitae*, the 162-page *De Administratione Guaranica Comparate ad Rempublicam Platonis Commentarius* occupies more than a third of the book. In the introduction to the treatise Peramás describes the methodology of his comparison:

This, then, will be the method of my writing: I will summarize what Plato had in mind on each topic; I will then say what happened among the Guaraní, and finally it will be up to you [sc. the reader], having compared the sections, to pronounce on whether the systems are mutually in agreement or, conversely, whether they differ. However, to treat this matter appropriately, an entire volume would be necessary, but this is neither the place nor the time. For this reason, taking a middle path, I will touch on just a few parts, from which it will be possible to conjecture about the rest.<sup>12</sup>

Peramás keeps to this structured approach as he addresses some two dozen aspects of the political experience there, including “On Commerce”, “On the Arts”, and “On Education”. The Platonic half of each chapter is a synthesis of material drawn from the *Republic* and the *Laws*, with which Peramás was intimately familiar.<sup>13</sup> The corresponding Guaraní halves provide detailed accounts of life within the *reducciones*. Following these chapters, we find an epilogue, a lengthy “Apostrophe to the More Liberal Philosophers”, and a conclusion.

While the conceptual link between Paraguay and utopianism remains strong to this day, the DAG itself has lapsed into obscurity owing in large part to the fact that only a handful of copies of the original edition survive. Spanish translations published in 1946 and 2004 brought the treatise to the attention of scholars working on Jesuit history, early modern Utopianism, and Guaraní culture, though often it is mentioned merely in passing.<sup>14</sup> Specialists in ancient

12 DAG 4. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. References to DAG are to paragraph numbers printed in the original edition: Peramás, José Manuel (1793) *De vita et moribus tredecim virorum paraguaycorum*. Faenza [Faventiae]: Ex Typographia Archii.

13 Plato, particularly in the editions and translations of Ficino, was important to the Jesuit curriculum throughout the early modern period; Susan Byrne, *Ficino in Spain* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 218.

14 Translations of DAG: Juan del Pino and Guillermo Furlong Cardiff, *La República de Platón y los Guaraníes* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1946) and Francisco Fernández Pertíñez and Bartomeu Melià, *Platón y los Guaraníes* (Asunción: CEPAG, 2004) (Spanish); Stelio Cro,



literature and its post-classical reception have only become aware of Peramás and the *DAG* more recently still, and much remains to be said about Peramás's engagement with ancient literature (including Plato and well over a dozen other Greco-Roman and Christian sources) and how his use of ancient sources relates to his larger political project.<sup>15</sup> This is a much larger task than can be accomplished here;<sup>16</sup> instead this chapter focuses more narrowly on contextualizing the *De Administratione Guaranica* within the European intellectual tradition, paying close attention to how Peramás attempts to reframe the existing discourse on both Paraguay and classical republicanism.

## 2 Antiquity and America

Almost immediately after being reintroduced to Europe by Manuel Chrysoloras and Uberto Decembrio, who translated it into Latin in 1402, Plato's *Republic* achieved emblematic status among humanist scholars. Familiarity with Plato and other figures of Greco-Roman antiquity spread throughout Italy and into the rest of Europe as the Renaissance *studia humanitatis* began to change the medieval system of education. In a letter to the Florentine Niccolò Niccoli, Poggio Bracciolini used Plato's work to remark on his travels in alien lands beyond Italy: "Clearly [the Germans] would have been right at home in Plato's Republic, where everything is held in common, since even without his doctrine they appear so well disposed to its ways."<sup>17</sup> Bracciolini is here describing

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*Guaranica* (Hamilton, Ontario: Symposium Press, 1994) (Italian). I am presently preparing the first modern edition and English-language translation of *DAG*.

- 15 Over the last decade new interest has surfaced in Peramás and ancient philosophical thought, e.g., Fabrizio Melai, "Sul significato del 'platonismo' di Peramàs nel suo *Commentarius* (1793)", *Società e Storia* 134 (2011), Arbo, "The Uses of Classical Learning in the Río de la Plata, c. 1750–1815", Desiree Arbo, "Plato and the Guaraní Indians", in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, ed. Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller (Oxford: Wiley, 2018), and Fabrizio Melai, "The Impossible Dialogue between Plato and Epicurus: José Manuel Peramás's *Commentarius* on the Paraguayan Missions", in *Transnational Perspectives on the Conquest and Colonization of Latin America*, ed. Jenny Mander, David Midgley, and Christine Beaulé (New York: Routledge, 2019).
- 16 In addition to the edition mentioned in n. 14 above, I am also preparing a monograph on the reception of Greco-Roman literature in *DAG*.
- 17 Eugenio Garin, *Prosatori latini del Quattrocento* (Milan: Ricciardi, 1952), 222–224. Stelio Cro, "Classical Antiquity, America, and the Myth of the Noble Savage", in *The Classical Tradition and the Americas Volume I: European Images of the Americas and the Classical Tradition Part 1*, ed. Wolfgang Haase and Meyer Reinhold (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), 389 recognizes that Bracciolini's ethnographic approach recalls that of Tacitus in the *Germania*. The Jesuit Martin Dobrizhoffer, a contemporary of Peramás, similarly

the communalism of the Germans, whose unfamiliar customs he frequently reports back to his friend in Italy.<sup>18</sup> For these humanists, antiquity offered an elite shorthand for the learned, but, more than that, the alterity of antiquity was easily mapped onto the alterity of almost any exotic 'other'.

For Europe, the late fifteenth century inaugurated a period of radical change in which the boundaries of the known world began to shift rapidly. Writing to his friend Paul of Middelburg in September 1492, the noted humanist scholar and Platonist Marsilio Ficino waxed poetic about embarking on a new Golden Age of discovery: "If we ought to call any age golden, without a doubt it is one which everywhere proffers golden minds. Anyone willing to consider the magnificent discoveries [*inventa*] of our age will scarcely doubt that it is such a one."<sup>19</sup> Unaware that Christopher Columbus was mere weeks from an encounter that would forever change the world, Ficino here praises discoveries of a different kind: the rediscovery of ancient learning, which fueled the Renaissance and reshaped European thought.<sup>20</sup> In Latin, each of these is styled an *inventio*, "a coming upon", which reveals a certain epistemological and geopolitical conceit about pre-existing truths awaiting European discovery. In reality, European encounters with worlds unknown to them, both the "ancient", via the recovery of Plato and other once lost Greek authors, and the "new", via the colonization of the Americas, proved to be a complex process of "invention" insofar as they involved creation of ideological apparatuses rather than mere perception.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly the coincidence of these major encounters led

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compares the Abipones of Argentina's Gran Chaco to Tacitus's Germans; see Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, "Between Ethnology and Romantic Discourse: Martin Dobrizhoffer's *History of the Abipones* in a (Post)modern Perspective", in *Jesuit Accounts of the Colonial Americas: Intercultural Transfers, Intellectual Disputes, and Textualities*, ed. Marc André Bernier, Clorinda Donato, and Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 133–134.

18 Peramás frequently draws on and quotes the *Germania* in his discussion of the Guaraní (DAG 46, 61a, 64, 117, 140a, 163, 175, and 313).

19 Marsilio Ficino, *The Letters of Marsilio Ficino: Volume 10 Being a Translation of Liber XI* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 2015), no. 34. Ficino begins his letter by citing the poetic (i.e., Hesiodic) and Platonic precedents for the trope of the Golden Age, which appears frequently in neo-Latin literature; see W. Leonard Grant, "A Classical Theme in Neo-Latin", *Latomus* 16, no. 4 (1957). For further discussion of *aurea ingenia*, see Michael J.B. Allen, *Synoptic Art: Marsilio Ficino on the History of Platonic Interpretation* (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1998), 1–49.

20 Echoing Cicero *Deiot.* 30 (XI) and 1 *Peter* 2.9, Ficino remarks, "In Florence, moreover, [this age] has brought back the Platonic teachings from darkness into the light" (no. 34).

21 On the "invention" of Paraguay in European thought, see Girolamo Imbruglia, *L'invenzione del Paraguay* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1983). In general, see Edmundo O'Gorman, *La invención de América* (Mexico City/Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1958).

to certain conceptual synergies; in particular, European understanding of the ancient world became a cipher for understanding the New World.

In his *Historia de las Indias*, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo established a classical heritage for the New World along ideological lines, for instance by identifying the Antilles with the Hesperides, which were in turn connected with the legendary Spanish king Hesperus.<sup>22</sup> Though this claim attracted vehement criticism, detractors like Francisco López de Gómara still maintained the classicizing approach by substituting Atlantis for the Hesperides.<sup>23</sup> Although also roundly criticized, most notably by Montaigne in *Des Cannibales*, “this comparison between America and Atlantis [became] common currency, shaping interpretations of the new American continent. Maps too, such as those by John Dee or Guillaume Sanson, bore the imprint of the America-Atlantis hypothesis”.<sup>24</sup> The overlap between the (re-)discovery of antiquity and the discovery of the New World can be seen in a wide variety of early modern literature, including Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), Tommaso Campanella’s *La Città del Sole* (1602), and Francis Bacon’s *Nova Atlantis* (1626), not to mention historical writings like the *De Orbe Novo Decades* (1511–1530) of Peter Martyr d’Anghiera. All of these works explicitly engage with the New World through the lens of Greco-Roman antiquity. But among so much that was exciting about America, the Jesuit Republic of Paraguay especially fascinated the classicizing imagination of Europeans.

### 3 The Jesuit Republic

While Spanish colonizing forces swept across the Americas rapidly establishing the Viceroyalties of New Spain (1535) and Peru (1542) with strong capitals at Mexico City and Lima, some parts of the Americas proved rather more resistant

22 See Antonello Gerbi, *Nature in the New World: From Christopher Columbus to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 271–274, Sarah H. Beckjord, *Territories of History: Humanism, Rhetoric, and the Historical Imagination in the Early Chronicles of Spanish America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007), 101–105, and David Lupher, *Romans in a New World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 214–219.

23 Gómara cites Marsilio Ficino’s edition of Plato as proof of the veracity of the Atlantis story.

24 Phillip John Usher, “Chopping up Columbus’ Pear: World Roaming after 1492”, in *Space: New Dimensions in French Studies*, ed. Emma Gilby and Katja Haustein (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005): 91. José de Acosta was noncommittal, but Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa was a believer; see Sabine MacCormack, *On the Wings of Time: Rome, the Incas, Spain, and Peru* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 249–250.

to external control. In a failed attempt to discover a direct shipping route from the Atlantic Ocean to the silver mines of Peru,<sup>25</sup> Spanish explorers founded the cities of Buenos Aires and Asunción (the capitals of the present-day nations Argentina and Paraguay) in the Río de la Plata region in 1536 and 1537 respectively. After only a few years, Buenos Aires was abandoned, leaving Asunción even more isolated than before. Hemmed in by the Andes to the West, the arid expanse of the Gran Chaco to the North-West, and the Portuguese-occupied territory of Brazil to the North-East, the area that would come to be known as Paraguay was sparsely populated and Spanish in name only. At the close of the sixteenth century, the Spanish and *mestizo* settlers numbered around five thousand while the indigenous population may have been a hundred times as large.<sup>26</sup>

As in other Spanish colonies, the *encomienda* system, sanctioned by Spain, allowed colonists to demand hard labor and tribute from the indigenous people in exchange for providing them with education.<sup>27</sup> An externally imposed serfdom (and quite often full-fledged slavery), the arrangement led to flagrant abuses by the colonial *encomenderos* and uprisings among the indigenous people, and by the time Spain and the colonial governors realized the extent of the exploitation, the situation was out of hand. In 1585, the first two Jesuits set out for Paraguay and inaugurated an effort to pacify the region that served both religious and geopolitical agendas.<sup>28</sup> A relatively new religious order, established only in 1540, the Jesuits – who had been in Peru since 1567, where they had proven themselves adept at mastering indigenous languages – were an obvious choice for the task and established Paraguay as a Jesuit Province in 1607 to be headed by Father Diego de Torres. The Jesuits clashed almost immediately with the colonists as they set about reforming the *encomienda* system. Backed by a series of royal decrees from Spain, Torres and the Provincial Governor Hernando Arias de Saavedra<sup>29</sup> devised a plan whereby the Jesuits would subdue, organize, and convert (all encompassed in the Spanish verb '*reducir*') as

25 On the importance of the silver mines at Potosí, see Kris Lane, *Potosí: The Silver City That Changed the World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019).

26 Frederick J. Reiter, *They Built Utopia: The Jesuit Missions in Paraguay, 1610–1768* (Potomac, Md: Scripta Humanistica, 1995), 19–20.

27 When the *encomienda* system was instituted in Paraguay in 1543, 26,000 Guaraní were initially forced into servitude; see Luis Néstor Osorio, *Las Reducciones Guaraníticas como Utopías en América* (Río Cuarto: ICALE, 2007), 12.

28 On the Jesuits in Paraguay, see Girolamo Imbruglia, *The Jesuit Missions of Paraguay and a Cultural History of Utopia (1568–1789)*, trans. Mark Weyr (Leiden: Brill, 2017) and Miguel de Asúa, *Science in the Vanished Arcadia: Knowledge of Nature in the Jesuit Missions of Paraguay and Río de la Plata* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 13–14.

29 Called Hernandarias, he was the first American-born colonial governor.

many as 150,000 hostile Guaraní into “ordinary” residents.<sup>30</sup> The first of over thirty Guaraní *reducciones* was founded in 1609 and the Jesuits set about convincing local groups that the new communities would provide safety from the *encomenderos* and the slave traders venturing into Paraguay from Brazil. Faced with the alternatives of serfdom and slavery, the Guaraní were attracted to the relative security of the Jesuit *reducciones*, where they traded their nomadic lifestyle for a sort of commune grounded in European, Christian norms.<sup>31</sup>

From the Jesuit point of view, these *reducciones* were quite successful. They represented a dramatic improvement on the *encomienda* system, and, despite sporadic battles and outbreaks of illness, they generally arrested the precipitous decline in the population of the indigenous peoples of Paraguay. Throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Jesuit Republic, as the network of *reducciones* came to be called, could boast of one success after another. For Europeans, this remarkable political experiment in Paraguay was interpreted within a classicizing framework. The Jesuit Republic was described and analyzed on the basis of a comparison with a composite of classical Sparta and Plato’s republic,<sup>32</sup> which many understood to be an enhanced version of the historical Sparta. Thus, Paraguay became Greek in the European imagination.

One of the first to sing its praises in Europe was the renowned Italian historian Ludovico Antonio Muratori in *Il Cristianesimo Felice* (1743–49), who based his account on three letters written by the Jesuit Gaetano Cattaneo. Though his source made no reference to the ancient world, Muratori chose two exempla from antiquity to illustrate the Jesuit project: the figure of Orpheus, drawing the savage beasts from the wilderness, and Cicero’s sketch in *De Inventione* of

30 It is estimated that by this time the indigenous population of Paraguay had already been reduced by half: Osorio, *Las Reducciones Guaraníticas como Utopías en América*, 14. On the meaning of the terms *reducir(se)* and *reducción*, see William F. Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 2.

31 Julia J. S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014) provides a balanced socioeconomic history that examines the cost-benefit analysis many Guaraní may have made when deciding whether to join these Jesuit communities. Scholars disagree on the importance of theoretical and practical antecedents in the establishment of the Jesuit *reducciones*; John E. Groh, “Antonio Ruíz de Montoya and the Early Reductions in the Jesuit Province of Paraguay”, *The Catholic Historical Review* 56, no. 3 (1970), 504n.16 offers an overview and Osorio, *Las Reducciones Guaraníticas como Utopías en América*, 34–64, Cro, “El Padre Peramás y su Guaranica”, and especially Imbruglia, *The Jesuit Missions of Paraguay and a Cultural History of Utopia (1568–1789)* provide a thorough analysis in light of utopian literature.

32 Though they describe different cities, *Republic* and *Laws* were often thought to be complementary works detailing a single republic.

how savage man became sophisticated through the cultivation of the “*artes*”.<sup>33</sup> He even drew on Greek and Roman civic nomenclature in order to describe the organization of the *reducciones* by analogy with ancient practice. Thus, Muratori transforms the “*Regidores*”, Guaraní elders charged with maintaining order in their community, into Roman Censors and Greek *Nomophylakes*.<sup>34</sup>

Montesquieu romanticizes the Jesuit endeavor in Paraguay even further by styling it as the culmination of an ancient political trajectory. In a section of *De l'Esprit des Lois* (1748) entitled “On Some Greek Institutions”,<sup>35</sup> Montesquieu describes the continuity and development of a legal system developed in Crete, adopted in Sparta, and corrected in Plato’s *Republic* and *Laws*. This system of government is so excellent, he says, that one might think it belongs to the realm of contemporary utopian fiction. Even amid the “dregs and corruption of our modern times”, Montesquieu can point to shining examples of this Greek tradition in the Americas: William Penn’s Quakers and the Jesuit Guaraní *reducciones*. After briefly comparing Penn with the Spartan law-giver Lycurgus, Montesquieu discusses Paraguay at some length, praising the Jesuits for “undertaking great things *and* meeting with success”. The key to this success, which he says others would do well to imitate, lies in the implementation of “the community of goods (*communauté de biens*) from Plato’s *Republic*”.

In 1756, the French Jesuit Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix published the definitive *Histoire du Paraguay* in an attempt to control the narrative about the now deeply polarizing province. Although Charlevoix had never visited South America, he had spent several years in New France (on which see further Barton/Mailloux and Yuzwa in this volume). This history of Paraguay treats the flora, fauna, and geography of the region, but it is ultimately an account of the Jesuit *reducciones*, “those Christian Republics, unequalled the world over, which have been founded in the middle of the most ferocious barbarity according to a plan more perfect than those of Plato, Lord Bacon, and the famed author of *Télémaque* [sc. Fénelon]”. Central to Charlevoix’s project, this characterization became its tagline and was frequently quoted in essays discussing the book. Moreover, it appears in slightly altered form as part of the subtitle to the English translation, which was published in 1769: *The history of Paraguay containing amongst many other new, curious, and interesting particulars of that country, a full and authentic account of the establishments*

33 Andrew Laird, “Orator, sage, and patriot: Cicero in colonial Latin America”, in *The Afterlife of Cicero*, ed. Gesine Manuwald (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2016).

34 Muratori *Il Cristianesimo Felice* XI, 56. The νομοφύλακες (“Guardians of the Law”) are central to the civic regime Plato outlines in the *Laws*.

35 *De l'Esprit des Lois*, 4.6.

*formed there by the Jesuits from among the savage natives in the very centre of barbarism: establishments allowed to have realized the sublime ideas of Fenelon, Sir Thomas More, and Plato.*

Even as opinion in Europe began to turn against the Jesuits and the priests increasingly came to be seen as greedy and manipulative, the association between Paraguay and the Greek “republican” tradition remained intact, indicating that a durable link had already formed between the two in the European imagination. In his 1756 *Essai sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations*, Voltaire maintains the analogy but tempers it by criticizing what he sees as an important discrepancy.

If there is anything that could give a sense of this colony, it is the ancient government of Lacedaemonia. Everything is held in common in this land of missions. Peru's neighbors know neither gold nor money. The defining characteristic of a Spartiate<sup>36</sup> was his obedience to the laws of Lycurgus, and the defining characteristic of a Paraguayan has been up until now his obedience to the laws of the Jesuits: they are similar in every way, except that the Paraguayans do not have slaves to sow their lands and cut their wood, like the Spartiates; *they* are the slaves of the Jesuits.<sup>37</sup>

Praising the Guaraní, Voltaire upholds the analogy by claiming that they resemble the Spartans in every way except one. His ironic observation about slavery elevates the Guaraní over the Spartans, but at the same time disparages the Jesuits for exploitation.<sup>38</sup> This critique problematizes the comparison in a way that previous writers had not, by identifying a power differential between the Jesuits and the Guaraní, which in turn highlighted the asymmetry of the analogy. Like Lycurgus, the Jesuits designed the perfect state, but unlike the Spartan law-giver, they did not leave their creation to flourish on its own. Thus, Voltaire indicates that the obedience that is the defining characteristic (*l'essence*) of being Paraguayan is nothing more than servitude.

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36 The Spartiates, or *Homoioi*, were Spartan citizen men so-called because they shared equal status – an arrangement that was central to the Spartan political system.

37 *Essai sur les Mœurs et l'Esprit des Nations* CLIV “Du Paraguay. De la domination des jésuites dans cette partie de l'Amérique; de leurs querelles avec les Espagnols et les Portugais”; emphasis mine.

38 Though critical of slavery, Voltaire was not an outspoken opponent of the practice and some of his writing on the topic is equivocal.

The criticism is more pointed in *Candide*, where Voltaire lampoons the Jesuits and recasts their republic as a kingdom.<sup>39</sup> In this satire, Cacambo describes the Jesuit Republic to the traveler Candide: “What an admirable thing their government is! The kingdom is already more than three hundred leagues in diameter; it is divided into thirty provinces. The fathers there have everything, and the people nothing; it is the masterpiece of reason and justice” (XIV). Published only three years after *Essai sur les Mœurs*, Voltaire reinterprets the details he gave in his earlier work. Yet even in this satirical dressing down, the *reducciones* are still cited in connection with “the masterpiece of reason and justice”, which might otherwise have been an apt description of Plato’s *Republic*. Thus, the debate intensifies but the terms remain fundamentally the same.<sup>40</sup>

As political opposition to the Jesuits mounted, the claims and the rhetoric surrounding the Order became more exaggerated. In the run up to the expulsion of the Jesuits from the Americas in 1767 and the suppression of the Order in 1773, impassioned rhetoric distorted the Paraguay-Greece analogy. In the year of the expulsion, the Italian Jesuit Giovanni Battista Noghera published a sensationalistic rebuttal to what he saw as the libelous description of the *reducciones* made by detractors like Voltaire.<sup>41</sup> “From innumerable lairs of uncivilized and cannibalistic beasts is now formed a single republic far superior in its habits and happier than Plato’s imagined republic”.<sup>42</sup> Opponents were no less brazen in their fanciful accounts. Most damning may have been Denis Diderot’s open attack on the *reducciones* in *Supplément au Voyage de Bougainville*, where the now mangled analogy is still recognizable.

A – Wasn’t Bougainville in Paraguay during the Jesuits’ expulsion?

B – Yes.

A – What does he say about it?

B – Less than he could have said, but enough for us to know that these cruel Spartiates in their black habits mistreated their Indian slaves like the Lacedemonians with their Helots, condemning them to hard labor, drinking their sweat, leaving them no private property rights, yoking

39 Compare the similar anti-Jesuit caricature in Basílio da Gama’s epic poem *O Uruguai* (1769), which details the 1756 conflict between the joint Spanish-Portuguese forces and seven Guaraní communities in eastern Paraguay.

40 The anonymous publication of *Relação Abreviada da República* in 1757 took for granted that readers would recognize “*República*” in the title as a reference to Paraguay.

41 Considered a compelling apology for the embattled Jesuits, this work was republished shortly after the suppression.

42 *Riflessioni sulla filosofia del bello spirito* 1.10.



them with superstition, demanding thorough veneration, walking among them, whip in hand, striking them indiscriminately regardless of age or sex. One more century and their expulsion would have been impossible, or the cause of a long war between these monks and the sovereign whose authority they'd been shaking off little by little.<sup>43</sup>

Though Diderot dispenses with Voltaire's playful irony in favor of a biting attack, he maintains the by then well-established classicizing framework. Crucially, however, he reorients the analogy such that the Jesuits no longer correspond to the law-giver Lycurgus, but rather to the Spartan citizens themselves. To accommodate this shift, Diderot introduces into the equation the peoples enslaved by the Spartans, the Helots, as counterparts for the Guaraní in his revised version of the analogy.

What is striking about the connection between Paraguay and the various incarnations of "Greece" in our sources is that, despite its consistency, the terms of the analogy are continually being recalibrated. Muratori says that Guaraní elders are chosen to be *Nomophylakes*, but he does not say who chooses them. Although in many respects the Guaraní communities were self-governed, the pair of Jesuits assigned to each *reducción* still performed certain executive functions – particularly related to managing the economy and external affairs.<sup>44</sup> Despite this crucial role, the Jesuits do not enter into Muratori's equation, only the Guaraní and the Greeks. Montesquieu offers more detail. He begins by mentioning the Jesuits and says that they are responsible for establishing "the community of goods of Plato's *Republic*", but he is vague about what, if any, role the Fathers play in that community. Do they stand outside of the community they established or do they have an ongoing role to play in it? For Voltaire the Guaraní are the Spartan *Homoioi*, the equal citizens, and the Jesuits are Lycurgus. He makes the facetious remark that the "only" difference between Paraguay and Sparta is that the Guaraní have no slaves; they *are* the slaves. Diderot pursues the same line of criticism but completely realigns the metaphor. For him, the Jesuits are now the *Homoioi* and the Guaraní are their Helot slaves.<sup>45</sup>

43 *Supplément au voyage de Bougainville* 1.

44 Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History*, 65–92.

45 Certain aspects of romanticized Greek polities (e.g., the Spartan enslavement of the Helots, the Platonic notion of the communal family) were difficult if not impossible to overlook and some early modern readers found them appalling. Given Diderot's attitude toward slavery in his later work, on which see Anthony Strugnell, "Diderot's anti-colonialism: a problematic notion", in *New Essays on Diderot*, ed. James Fowler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), his criticism of the Jesuits probably applies equally to the Spartans.

#### 4 Peramás and *Res Publica Rediviva*

By now confused and clichéd, the association between Paraguay and the ancient Greek republic invited Peramás's critical re-appraisal. In the introduction to *DAG*, he examines the validity of the popular connection between Plato and the Guaraní by asking, "Does [Plato's republic] exist, or has it ever existed anywhere? This is what I am now trying to investigate and it occurs to me to show that in America among the Guaraní Indians there existed something similar to what Plato devised".<sup>46</sup> The extent of that similarity, however, Peramás leaves to the reader to determine.<sup>47</sup> We can attribute this in part to a rhetorical strategy, whereby the author's subtle shaping of the reader's opinion proves more effective than a simple pronouncement, but this by itself is unsatisfying. After setting out his careful point-by-point comparison Peramás matter-of-factly says, "Here is what I had to tell you about the Guaraní system compared to Plato's Republic. There are certainly many more things that could be added here. But I just wanted to provide some sort of proof on the matter".<sup>48</sup> If the proof (*specimen*) he refers to is meant to be a simple validation of the comparison between Paraguay and Plato, Peramás might have concluded with a persuasive argument for the similarity of the two. Instead, he launches into a completely different argument, one at which he had only hinted before.

The opening paragraph of *DAG* reveals that Peramás's topic is of urgent import:

If there has ever been a time to put into action Plato's famous Republic, it is surely this one, when the flock of Epicurean philosophers is going mad, hating the holy institutions of our ancestors and the good way of governing, turning everything upside-down and thinking up new things daily to make the masses 'happy' (as they say). So why then don't they adopt that form of Republic proposed by the philosopher *par excellence*, whom Cicero calls the most learned of all Greece?<sup>49</sup>

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This work was not published until 1796 (after Peramás's death). However, it does provide a witness to the state of the analogy in the 1770s.

46 *DAG* 2.

47 *DAG* 4, see n.7. See Thomas O'Brien, "Utopia in the midst of oppression? A reconsideration of Guaraní/Jesuit communities in seventeenth and eighteenth century Paraguay", *Contemporary Justice Review* 7 (2004), for a critique of applying the term Utopia to the Guaraní communities.

48 *DAG* 303.

49 *DAG* 1.

To his late eighteenth-century audience in Europe, it would have been abundantly clear that Peramás is here referring to the contemporary political upheaval in France. At the time of his writing, civil war was raging throughout France and many feared it would spill over into other nations.<sup>50</sup> In particular, Peramás focuses on how long-standing institutions, both civic and religious, have recently been jettisoned as the direct result of the ascendancy of Enlightenment liberalism. The insane “flock of Epicureans” refers to philosophers like Locke, Rousseau, and the Encyclopedists who championed the tenets of natural rights and the social contract that guided revolutionary legislation such as the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen”.<sup>51</sup>

Positioning himself within this discourse, Peramás targets key concepts drawn from the political idiom of the liberal *philosophes*: “happiness” (*felicitas*), the “community of goods” (*communio rerum*), and “equality” (*par sors/aequatio*).<sup>52</sup> In the opening paragraph, we see his contempt for the liberal interpretation of happiness, “... in order to make the peoples ‘happy’ (if you can call it that)”.<sup>53</sup> Later on in the treatise, he challenges contemporary liberalism more directly: “But still, the community of goods and the equality of all in the Republic is, according to you, the best. Is it the best?”<sup>54</sup> As noted above, the *communauté de biens* is the very feature of Plato’s *Republic* that Montesquieu praises the *reducciones* for implementing.<sup>55</sup> Challenging the underlying assumption that the community of goods is in fact the best political model,

50 In fact, revolutionary France was already at war with the Holy Roman Empire before Peramás completed his work.

51 This foundational document of the French Revolution was adopted in August of 1789 and served as a basis for the constitution. On Epicureanism and the French Revolution, see Thomas M. Kavanagh, “Epicureanism across the French Revolution”, in *Lucretius and Modernity: Epicurean Encounters Across Time and Disciplines*, ed. Jacques Lezra and Liza Blake (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016). See also Melai, “The Impossible Dialogue between Plato and Epicurus: José Manuel Peramás’s *Commentarius* on the Paraguayan Missions”.

52 These terms are also fundamental to Platonic political thought, where εὐδαιμονία is described as the object of civic life (*Republic* 420b) and private property is banned or severely restricted (*Republic* 416d–417b, 421c); see Schofield 1999, 63–70. The Platonic philosophical perspective, however, is rather different from the Enlightenment interpretation of these concepts. Eric Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), discusses the reception of this Greek tradition in early modern republicanism.

53 DAG 1.

54 DAG 316.

55 Nelson, *The Greek Tradition in Republican Thought*, 98–99, 171, identifies the *communauté de biens* as an important component of the “Greek” republican tradition in early modern thought.

Peramás questions the desirability of “equality” by citing several examples of heterogeneity being preferred to homogeneity.<sup>56</sup> Peramás ultimately argues that some societies are better suited to egalitarianism than others.

The Guaraní, when the missionaries first met them, were all equal in relation to each other ..., such that, if you proposed something better, you could easily incline them towards equality (God willing) and transfer them from a state of severe penury to a life of great abundance: and all of this without objection from the Caciques themselves, whose food and way of life was no different from the miserable situation of their subjects, reserving for themselves a certain degree of authority in war and some almost insignificant power.<sup>57</sup>

For Peramás, the “community of goods” could be achieved in Paraguay because Guaraní society had little stratification and was thus already fairly egalitarian before the arrival of the Jesuits. More important, however, for Peramás’s argument is the claim that the ‘republic’ instituted among the Guaraní raised the quality of life for everyone.

By contrast, he argues that this type of egalitarian society cannot be instituted in Europe, where society is thoroughly stratified and property rights are fundamental to the entrenched legal and social order. “But although it would be desirable for this way of life (sc. egalitarian communalism) to be extended to all classes of people, there is no hope of it”.<sup>58</sup> Peramás is adamant that any attempt to wipe out inequality in Europe will lead to the unraveling of civilization.

There is only one thing I contend, that after property has been divided up, either by design or chance, someone wanting equality for the citizens would be the same as wanting to summon back into the cities that sad and horrible confusion of public evil similar to the confusion in which:

The world over, Nature had but one face,  
what we call Chaos: a raw and undefined mass,  
nothing but inert matter, and all in the one place were  
discordant atoms of things poorly fitted together.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> In the family, in music, in the body, etc. – *DAG* 322–326.

<sup>57</sup> *DAG* 308.

<sup>58</sup> *DAG* 337.

<sup>59</sup> *DAG* 316, quoting Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.6–9.

Quoting from the opening lines of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Peramás juxtaposes this chaotic image of nature with the paradise of the Garden of Eden, alluded to earlier in the same paragraph. Although Ovid's account of the beginning of the universe draws on diverse philosophical traditions, the portion quoted here is most reminiscent of Lucretius's Epicureanism.<sup>60</sup> Recalling Peramás's earlier accusation that the *philosophes* are nothing but a mad flock of Epicureans, we detect in this allusion a sophisticated insinuation that their attempts to return to the state of nature will result not in the idyllic garden (of Epicurus or of Eden) but in Ovidian chaos.

Peramás accuses those who want to transform Europe into an egalitarian republic of failing to see the vast chasm between theory and practice; one that even Plato, he points out, did not attempt to bridge.

Indeed, how many and how grave are the difficulties that that Platonic community of goods and equality of everyone entails? Certainly, nowhere until now has any state consisted in such arrangements, nor, as is right to conjecture, will any ever be able to. I wish that even Plato himself, the author of this egalitarian theory, would explain to us in what way his orders could be carried out.<sup>61</sup>

Drawing on his vast store of rhetorical tools, Peramás points out an important disconnect in the classicizing political theory of his ideological opponents: as an ideal state, Plato's republic is not constrained by reality, and it is thus a poor model for real world political reform. The failure to recognize this simple fact is, in Peramás's view, a grave error.

In addition to attacking the use, or misuse, of Plato in revolutionary philosophy, Peramás engages in a far more subtle campaign to undermine his opponents' claim to any classical authority. Concluding his argument against the attempt to transform European states into egalitarian republics, Peramás summarizes much of what he has laid out in the preceding pages.

Things being as they are, if any of the more liberal Philosophers tried to transfer the Guaraní system to Europe, he would make a horrible mistake and (things being as they are) would deserve the Republic least of all, the order of everything would be disturbed, and there would be confusion between the social classes and their duties. To how great a crisis

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60 On Peramás and Jesuit interest in Lucretius, see Melai, "The Impossible Dialogue between Plato and Epicurus: José Manuel Peramás's *Commentarius* on the Paraguayan Missions".

61 DAG 322.

would a single proposal, since the proposed law was about dividing up and redrawing the boundaries of lands, have led the Roman Republic (if the consul Cicero had not opposed the attempt of the Tribune of the Plebs)?<sup>62</sup>

Here, however, Peramás makes an important substitution. Instead of claiming that the *philosophes* are trying to institute Plato's Republic in Europe, he claims that they are trying to institute the Guaraní system (*Guaranica administratio*). This shift is important for two reasons. First, *Guaranica administratio* is the title of Peramás's treatise, and his injunction here is tantamount to a warning against misusing his work. Second, Peramás is essentially revealing that the emperor has no clothes by indicating that the *philosophes* are not actually pursuing Platonic political philosophy but instead an imperfect copy of it. Besides the fact that Plato deplored the pursuit of mimetic derivatives, the Platonism of the Guaraní Republic is, as we have seen, largely a construct of a fanciful tradition in which generations of Europeans invested in the analogy between Paraguay and a hybrid ancient Greek republic.<sup>63</sup>

In addition to re-appropriating the classical authors they claimed as models, Peramás reshapes the *philosophes'* identity vis-à-vis classical antiquity. Although he had earlier branded them Epicureans, Peramás demotes them even further with a quotation from the *Acts of the Apostles*, saying that "they follow in the custom of the ancient Athenians who 'spend their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to whatever is new'".<sup>64</sup> Although the Athenians featured in *Acts* are the ones Paul met at the Areopagus during the first century CE, within the context of Platonic philosophical polemic, they resemble the Sophists against whom Plato constantly railed.<sup>65</sup> Thus, not only are the *philosophes* shown to be busybodies, but they are here styled as the enemies of the ancient philosopher whose republicanism they claim to cherish.

62 DAG 338. There are three surviving orations of Cicero *Against the Agrarian Law of Tribune of the Plebs Publius Servilius Rullus*, whom, because of his zeal for revolution, he attacked viciously and forced to abandon his intended proposal.

63 This passage also reclaims Cicero, another ideological favorite of revolutionary republican philosophy. Here, Peramás shows Cicero putting down revolution in Rome.

64 DAG 307, citing Paul's encounter with the Athenians from *Acts* 17.21.

65 On novelty in ancient Greek culture, see Armand D'Angour, *The Greeks and the New: Novelty in Ancient Greek Imagination and Experience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

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A carefully crafted text, *De Administratione Guaranica* compels us to re-evaluate the early modern appropriation of classical legacies and their use in defining the Americas. The Jesuit-Guaraní Republic rose to prominence in the European imaginary, in part, on the strength of a classicizing ideology that quickly took root in a political discourse that saw ancient narratives playing out anew in the Americas. When the political winds blew in the opposite direction and admiration gave way to loathing, the long-running drama of Antiquity/America was not rejected but merely recast with the Jesuits now playing the role of corrupt villain rather than beneficent law-giver. Throughout his exilic writings Peramás is unapologetic in his steadfast defence of the Jesuit project in Paraguay and yet he does not insert himself into the debate on it as one might expect. Indeed, the Jesuits hardly figure into DAG's narrative. Instead of working within the established framework and restoring the Lycurgan image the Order once held, he uses his detailed analysis of the Greece-Paraguay trope to take control of a much broader discourse. Turning the tables on anti-Jesuit polemicists, Peramás attacks the conceits that underlie their own ideological self-fashioning. In the final analysis, Peramás's careful study reveals that the Guaraní have a far stronger claim to ancient legacies of republicanism than the *philosophes* whose philosophy is nothing more than sophistry.

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# Degenerating the Classical Canon in Brazil: Bernardo Guimarães's Ovidian *A Origem do Mênstruo* ['The Origin of Menstruation'] (1875)

Connie Bloomfield-Gadêlha

## 1 Introduction

The erotic poem *A Origem do Mênstruo* ['The Origin of Menstruation'],<sup>1</sup> published in 1875 by the Brazilian Romantic writer Bernardo Guimarães, claims to be a translation of a translation of a lost Ovidian aetiological poem, unearthed in the Pompeiian excavations. Whilst this labyrinthine Ovidian reception is fictitious, Guimarães's poem itself also has an extraordinary transmission history: fragmented by censorship, it passes between marginalized groups, both elite and popular, and survived for almost a century through oral performance and clandestine chapbooks, before being rediscovered by the *avant-garde* poets and translators of the twentieth century. By examining Guimarães's engagement with Ovid and contextualizing this poem's fluctuating political status, this chapter traces out *Mênstruo*'s mercurial transformations, noting how the poem's nonlinear and precarious survival matches its content and disturbs canonical teleology. I will argue that Guimarães's destabilization of the classical canon complicates the narrative of Brazil's transition from colony to independent nation, demonstrating that classical literature can be an especially useful tool in the comprehension and analysis of nineteenth-century Brazilian cultural history. Moreover, a closer look at Guimarães's use of the classical canon to explore linguistic and moral degeneration reveals that key themes in twentieth-century Brazilian modernism had been present in the nation's literary subconscious long before.

Guimarães was born in 1825 in the city of Ouro Preto, in Minas Gerais. He graduated in Law from the University of São Paulo, and went on to become a judge, a literary critic, and a Latin teacher. He is most famous for his novels, notably the abolitionist *A Escrava Isaura* ['Isaura the Slave'] (also 1875), which has entered the Brazilian canon. While still at university he and a group of student poets formed the today altogether less well known 'Epicurean Society'.

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1 I am grateful to Artur Costrino for first introducing me to this extraordinary poem and our subsequent discussions.

Here, they pushed back against the nationalistic idealism of the first generation of Romantics in Brazil by exploring melancholy, grotesque, and degenerative imagery, influenced by writers such as Byron, Shelley, Musset, and Heinrich Heine.<sup>2</sup> They developed nonsensical and obscene poetry which they called 'Pantagruelic' verse,<sup>3</sup> which parodied and mixed literary motifs to 'break with literary hierarchies'.<sup>4</sup> Seen as indicative of psychological disturbance,<sup>5</sup> and therefore not compatible with the national project, these negative aesthetics were censored from the official literary canon;<sup>6</sup> very little from this group survives today.

Guimarães's subversion of Latin literature in *Mênstruo* was consistent with his disruption of national narratives. He was writing during the rule of king Dom Pedro II, who, renowned for his erudition, was an avid classicist and translator of classical texts. Therefore, when looking to establish a new narrative for the recently independent country, Dom Pedro II turned to Rome.<sup>7</sup> As well as using Republican Rome as a political model, Dom Pedro II prioritized Latin as the basis of education in his Colégio Império and elevated early colonial figures such as the *bandeirantes* – enslavers and gold-hunters from central-southern Brazil – to Romanized models of Brazilian masculinity.<sup>8</sup> In light of Dom Pedro II's contemporary uses of Roman antiquity in the Brazilian state, Guimarães's treatment of the Latin canon was inherently political. Moreover, it is no coincidence that Guimarães chose Ovid from the Latin corpus, since *Mênstruo* coincided with the second of two surges in Portuguese translations of the Roman poet: the first occurring in the mid-eighteenth century by the erotic poet Manuel Maria Barbosa du Bocage, whose works began to be printed in Brazil from 1810, followed by Antônio Feliciano de Castilho in the

2 Fabiano Rodrigo da Silva Santos, *Lira Dissonante: Considerações Sobre Aspectos Do Grotesco Na Poesia de Bernardo Guimarães e Cruz e Sousa* (São Paulo, UNESP: 2009), 28.

3 This name alludes to French Renaissance writer François Rabelais's *The Life of Gargantua and of Pantagruel*, which features scatological humour, satirical style and wordplay.

4 Antônio Candido, *O Discurso e a Cidade*. (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1993), 229.

5 Cilaine Alves, *O Belo e O Disforme: Álvares de Azevedo e a Ironia Romântica* (São Paulo, EdUSP: 1998), 26.

6 Glauciane Reis Teixeira, "Elixir do Pajé e Origem do Mênstruo: A Omissão Da Historiografia Literária", *Letrônica* 2 (2009), 197.

7 Margaret M. Bakos and Raquel dos Santos Funari, "História da Tradição Clássica no Brasil dos séculos XIX e XX. Egito antigo no Brasil: egiptologia e egiptomania", in *A Tradição Clássica e o Brasil*, eds. André Leonardo Chevitarese, Gabriele Cornelli and Maria Aparecida de Oliveira Silva (Brasília, Fortium Editora: 2008), 86.

8 *Ibid.*, 188.

mid-nineteenth century. Guimarães himself was an accomplished Latinist and would have been familiar with both the original texts and these translations.<sup>9</sup>

In Guimarães's own spurious Ovidian translation, Venus is preparing to spend the night with Anchises when the nymph Galatea sees her shaving her pubic hair. Thinking that she is crouching to 'take a shit', the nymph jokily throws a stone at her. Venus slips, cutting herself, and is rescued by Cupid in a chariot. She is received on Mount Olympus by the male gods, who tend to her, aroused by the intimate wound and hoping to gain sexual favors, whilst the goddesses mock her, still bitter from the judgement of Paris. Finally, Jupiter decrees that all women will bleed monthly from their genitals to solemnize Venus's suffering, and thus menstruation was created. This poem is not a simply an erotic parody, but rather a sophisticated fusion of diverse elements from across the Ovidian corpus. Guimarães shifts between the wit and controversial frankness of Ovid's *Amores*, the more philosophical explorations of aetiology in the *Fasti* and *Metamorphoses*, and the preoccupation with censorship and canonical status of the *Tristia*. Moreover, the dialogue between the two poets is complex: at times Guimarães interacts directly with Ovid, at others Guimarães's own troubled reception mirrors his model's uneasy relationship to the Augustan canon, such that a study of the two poets together is an examination both of deliberate influences and illuminating parallels.

*A Origem do Mênstruo* is underpinned by a concern with degeneration, primarily manifested in two key themes: loss and the grotesque. Guimarães's reception of Ovid is deeply preoccupied with loss, both as physical disintegration of a text, and as loss of sense through the impossibility of translation. This theme is incisively theorized by Joshua Billings as an 'erotics of reception'. Billings develops Plato's depiction in the *Symposium* of Eros, who is the unstable fusion of his parents, *Aporia* (absence) and *Euporia* (resource). Billings argues that this dialectic between absence and presence is a defining feature of classical reception, which centres on 'the ways [the classical world] is experienced as absent'.<sup>10</sup> The destabilizing erotics of reception within *Mênstruo* produce a protean text, the ramifications of which undergird the analyses of this chapter. In this, Bakhtin's work on the carnivalesque and grotesque as governed by 'changing, playful, undefined forms'<sup>11</sup> provides an illuminating framework. In particular, Guimarães represents translation as grotesque degeneration and

9 Vagner Camilo, *Risos Entre Pares: Poesia e Comichade no Romantismo Brasileiro – 2. Geração* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1993), 87.

10 Joshua Billings, "Hyperion's symposium: an erotics of reception", *Classical Receptions Journal* 2 (2010), 21.

11 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 11.

regeneration. This grotesque reworking of the canon eventually led *avant-garde* translators and poets of the twentieth century to rediscover Guimarães as a paradigm of literary regeneration and a predecessor of Surrealism.

## 2 The Degenerate(d) Text

Guimarães exploits contemporary archaeological fascination with rediscovered artefacts to explore concerns about cultural endurance in the face of both physical destruction and censorship. *Mênstruo* opens with a pseudo-historical note:

De uma fábula inédita de Ovídio, achada nas escavações de Pompéia e vertida em latim vulgar por Simão de Nuntua.

[From an unpublished fable by Ovid, found in the Pompeiian excavations and rendered into vulgar Latin by Simon of Nuntua.]<sup>12</sup>

Reports of the Pompeiian excavations arrived in Latin America through Mexico from the late 1750s onwards,<sup>13</sup> revealing material which ‘nourished the nineteenth-century pornographic imagination’, so that fantasies set in Roman antiquity became a popular sub-genre of Luso-Brazilian erotic fiction.<sup>14</sup> In Brazilian cultural politics, a desire to uncover a prehistory of its own prompted state interest in indigenous archaeologies. There was, therefore, great excitement when a manuscript was found in 1839 in the Livraria Pública da Corte [‘Public Library of the Court’], written in the mid-1700s, which seemed a genuine account of a ruined ancient city in the state of Bahia.<sup>15</sup> State endorsed expeditions were launched to recover this lost Brazilian heritage.<sup>16</sup> The account proved to be fictitious, but the episode brought the idea of a national

12 All translations from Portuguese are my own.

13 Martín Almagro-Gorbea and Jorge Maier Allende, *De Pompeya al Nuevo Mundo: la corona española y la arqueología en el siglo XVIII* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2012).

14 Leonardo Mendes, “The Bachelor’s Library: Pornographic Books on the Brazil – Europe Circuit in the Late Nineteenth Century”, in *The Transatlantic Circulation of Novels Between Europe and Brazil, 1789–1914*, ed. Márcia Abreu (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 88.

15 Johnni Langer, “A Cidade Perdida da Bahia: Mito e Arqueologia no Brasil Império”, *Revista Brasileira de História* 22 (2002). Intriguingly, the author of this spurious archaeological account was João da Silva Guimarães, also from Minas Gerais (*ibid.* 132). Whether there is any family connection between this earlier Guimarães and our Bernardo Guimarães is unclear.

16 *Ibid.*, 131.

archaeological heritage back to the forefront of the nineteenth-century Brazilian imagination. At a similar time, Romanticism in Brazil turned to indigenous imagery to create a mythical patrimony for the newly independent country.<sup>17</sup> Guimarães engages with these debates, producing two erotic poems, published together:<sup>18</sup> *Elixir do Pajé* ['The Shaman's Elixir'] – initially used as the title for the pair – which parodied early nineteenth-century Romantic Indianist novels, and the fictitious archaeological manuscript under discussion here, *A Origem do Mênstruo*.

The 'discovered' and 'translated' document as a cue for literary invention has a long history within the classical tradition dating back to the ancient novel.<sup>19</sup> Texts such as *Dictys of Crete* (4th century AD) and *Dares the Phrygian* (potentially 5th century AD) claim to be multilayered translations into Latin from Greek and Phoenician of spurious eye-witness accounts of the Trojan War.<sup>20</sup> Modern manifestations of this tradition are wide ranging, from Macpherson's overly creative and much contested 'translations' of the so-called 'Homer of the North', the ancient Scottish poet Ossian,<sup>21</sup> to Elizabeth Barrett Browning's collection of sonnets, titled *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850) to mask her own authorship, to the late eighteenth-century *Anarchiad* from the early U.S. Republic.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, this trope was used in Latin America as early as the seventeenth century by Diego Mexía, a Sevillian-Peruvian translator from Latin into Spanish.<sup>23</sup> Mexía begins his rendition of Ovid's *Heroides* with a note not dissimilar in tenor from Guimarães's own, in this case concerning the apocryphal discovery of Ovid's pen in the ruins of an ancient building – the metaphorical pen, presumably, to which all Ovidian translators aspire.<sup>24</sup> Again, translation becomes entwined with the rediscovered physical object, suggesting an analogy between the two: translation, like archaeology, can reveal previously lost texts.<sup>25</sup> Thus Guimarães inserts his poem into a wider tradition of

17 Cf. Antônio Gonçalves Dias, "I-Juca Pirama", in *Últimos Cantos* (Rio de Janeiro: F. de Paula Brito, 1851).

18 Camilo, *Risos Entre Pares*, 86.

19 I am grateful to Andrew Laird for fascinating and informative discussions on this theme.

20 Cf. Karen Ní-Mheallaigh, "Lost in translation: the Phoenician Journal of Dictys of Crete", in *The Romance Between Greece and the East*, eds. Tim Whitmarsh and Stuart Thomson (Cambridge: CUP, 2013), 196–210; Karen Ní-Mheallaigh, "The 'Phoenician letters' of Dictys of Crete and Dionysius Scytobrachion", *Cambridge Classical Journal* 58 (2012), 181–193.

21 Cf. K.K. Ruthven, *Faking Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 2001).

22 See Adam Goldwyn's work on the *Anarchiad* in this volume.

23 See Joanne van der Woude's work on Mexía in this volume.

24 I owe these observations on Diego de Mexía's 'Ovidian' pen to Maya Feile Tomes.

25 As exemplified in the rediscovery of Greek material through the Arabic tradition in the early Renaissance.

false classicizing aetiologies, in which the claim to have been found amongst ruins, or to have been translated, is a trope that signifies fiction. Guimarães combines this with the artificial creation of national narratives in the Bahian ruins, so that *Mênstruo* opens as a political tension between preservation and loss of culture, original and translation, and truth and fiction.

The same positivistic nationalism that allowed itself to be duped by the Bahian ruins also restricted what could be said in the cultural sphere, leading to the censorship of Guimarães's erotic works, which were deemed manifestations of psychological degeneracy.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Augustan Rome's gendered moral codes, which especially exalted the figure of the chaste *matrona*, made Ovid's erotic poetry liable to censorship. Moreover, recourse to Hellenistic models in the first century CE encouraged new literary unease about how Ovid related to the canonical monuments of Augustan literature.<sup>27</sup> In reaction to this, Ovid constructs a poetic tension between survival, destruction, and censorship. Poetic endurance is equated to immortality:

ergo etiam cum me supremus adederit ignis,  
vivam, parsque mei multa superstes erit.

Am.1.15.41–2<sup>28</sup>

[So even when I'm given to the final flames,  
I'll live, and the better part of me will survive.]

On the other hand, exclusion from the Augustan canon becomes poetic and physical execution:

carminibus metus omnis obest; perditus ensem  
haesurum iugulo iam puto iamque meo.

Tr.1.1.43–44

[Every fear harms verse: I'm lost and always  
afraid of a sword slicing at my throat.]

Furthermore, Ovid's exile poetry mirrors his earlier erotic poetry, so that rather than recounting a *paraklausithyron* (a type of poem which depicts the lover

26 Alves, *O Belo e O Disforme*, 26.

27 Philip Hardie, "Ovid and Early Imperial Literature", in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardie (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 38.

28 English translations of Ovid are taken from A.S. Kline.



locked out from his beloved) between himself and his mistress Corinna, whom he addresses from outside a closed door in *Amores* 1.2, the *Tristia* narrates his unrequited love for Rome. Likewise, as epitomized in *Mênstruo*, the Epicurean Society used sexuality to critique contemporary positivist politics. Thus, for both Ovid and Guimarães, the danger of censorship is expressed as an erotic tension, summarized in Billings's theory that the dialectics of survival and destruction produce desire.

Furthermore, this careful eroticization of exile has led scholars to argue that Ovid's expulsion was fabricated as part of his self-conscious literary aesthetic, through which he tested what could be said in Augustan Rome.<sup>29</sup> As with the literary trope of the 'found document', Ovid's ambiguous exile produces parallel tensions between survival and preservation and between reality and fiction. Similarly, the Epicurean Society were deeply unreliable narrators of their own lives. They invented sicknesses, fights, and unfortunate incidents, through which they marginalized themselves from mainstream society and caused significant difficulties for literary historians.<sup>30</sup> The ensuing unreliability of their work's production and circulation forced its reception to follow the Epicurean Society's unstable aesthetics of degeneration, rendering it inherently anti-canonical, defiant of positivist national narratives, and therefore, as expounded by Ovid, vulnerable to destruction. Both writers thus framed their poetry as erotic transgressions between fiction and reality, an ambiguity through which they explored precarious survival within complex political environments.

This parallel seems intentional, since Ovid's exile poetry became 'foundational texts of the age of decline',<sup>31</sup> making him a fitting model for the Epicurean Society's aesthetics of Romantic degeneration. This is exemplified as Ovid mourns the deterioration of his poetry whilst it battles political exile to return to Rome:

littera suffusas quod habet maculosa lituras,  
laesit opus lacrimis ipse poeta suum.  
siqua videbuntur casu non dicta Latine,  
in qua scribebat, barbara terra fuit.

*Tr.* 3.1.15–18

29 First suggested by J.J. Hartman, "De Ovidio poeta commentatio" (Lugduni Batavorum: Brill, 1905), 70; for some more recent discussion, see, e.g., Alvar Ezquerro, A., "Ovid in Exile: Fact or Fiction?", *Annals of Ovidius University Constanta*, 2010, 107–26.

30 Alves, *O Belo e O Disforme*, 103.

31 Philip Hardie, "Ovid and Early Imperial Literature", 35.

[if the writing's streaked with blotted erasures,  
the poet marred his own work with his tears.  
If any phrase might not seem good Latin,  
it was a land of barbarians he wrote in.]

Censorship is thus imagined as both poetic degeneration and physical fragmentation. Guimarães's poetry is literally fragmented in a bowdlerized edition of his works from 1885. The effect is most striking in this stanza from the other poem of the pair, the *Elixir do Pajé*:

Que tens ....., que pesar te oprime,  
Que assim te vejo murcho e cabisbaixo,  
Sumido entre essa imensa .....  
Mole caindo.... p.... ..

[What is the matter ....., what sorrow oppresses you,  
Such that I now see you sunken and downcast,  
buried among this immense .....  
Soft falling..... p.....]<sup>32</sup>

The letters of the offending words have been replaced with dots, truncating the words 'caralho' [cock], 'pentelheira' [pubic hair], 'pela perna abaixo' [down below the leg]. The resulting poem resembles a lacunose papyrus, so that Guimarães's transmission enacts both Ovid's preoccupation with censorship and destruction, and the archaeological dialectic of loss and preservation within which Guimarães frames the poem. This fragmentation transforms the poem: when the indecent words are removed, the phrases 'buried among great' and 'soft falling' evoke Romantic imagery of fallen grandeur. In the same bowdlerized edition, the censorship of *Mênstruo* is visually unremarkable. Most verses remain unchanged, and out of context read as close classical imitation:

Sorriu o furto a ciumenta Juno,  
lembrando o antigo pleito,  
e Palas, orgulhosa lá consigo,  
resmoneou: – "Bem-feito!"

32 In José Maria Vaz Pinto Coelho, *Poesias e Romances do Dr. Bernardo Guimarães*. (Rio de Janeiro: Tipographia Universal de Laemmert & Co., 1885), 203–216. Access to text provided by Acervo da Fundação Biblioteca Nacional – Brasil.

[Jealous Juno smiled in secret,  
remembering the ancient argument,  
and Pallas, proud by her side,  
muttered: "Well deserved!"]

The minimal need for erasure in the censored *Mênstruo* demonstrates how little intervention was required for Guimarães to twist the classical ideal into transgressive eroticism. The poem's degeneration through censorship thus exposes the proximity of erotic transgression to the Romantic ideal, between which the censored text oscillates unstably in the manner theorized by Billings.<sup>33</sup>

Censorship removed *Mênstruo* from the textual tradition for several years; however, the poem was preserved through oral transmission. Indeed, Basílio de Magalhães records that 'of all or almost all Bernardo Guimarães's books, the most popular [...] is an obscene poem, titled "Elixir do Pajé", which was never printed! Rare is the person from Minas Gerais who does not know it by heart', and goes on to call him 'the inspired troubadour from Ouro Preto',<sup>34</sup> echoed by Antônio Cândido.<sup>35</sup> Here they allude to an alignment between Guimarães, an erudite writer, and Northeast Brazil's oral popular poetries, partly developed from the conveyance of European troubadour traditions by the Portuguese in the sixteenth century, but typically associated with those who had little access to formal education (on which see further Artur Costrino's chapter here). Indeed, Cândido informs us that, excluded from the official literary scene, *Mênstruo* was printed in popular chapbooks known as *folhetos* [chapbooks].<sup>36</sup> Censorship thus pushed *Mênstruo* from the elite maverick student group context to popular and oral circuits, oscillating between the textual and the oral and from one marginal audience to another, at opposite ends of the class system. Fittingly, this instability creates a lacuna in textual history to parallel Guimarães's fictional loss and rediscovery of an Ovidian fragment.

This type of fertile encounter between popular and elite culture was not uncommon: classical mythology was used in Brazilian popular poetries from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and constituted an important component of oral erudition, through which poets would demonstrate their prowess

33 Joshua Billings, "Hyperion's symposium", 5.

34 Basílio de Magalhães, *Bernardo Guimarães (esboço crítico)* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia do Anuário do Brasil, 1926), 113.

35 Antônio Cândido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira, Volume 2 (1836-1880)* (Belo Horizonte – Rio de Janeiro: Editora Itatiaia Limitada, 2000), 157.

36 *Ibid.*; Camilo, *Risos Entre Pares*, 79.

in improvised public poetic duels.<sup>37</sup> The mutual popular and elite interest in classical mythology led these *folheto* editions of Guimarães's erotic poetry to be misattributed to another poet, Laurindo Rabelo, who, despite being born into a poorer family in Rio de Janeiro, was highly educated and a qualified doctor.<sup>38</sup> Rabelo's work has had lasting impact on popular oral traditions,<sup>39</sup> and, like Guimarães, he uses classical imagery in obscene contexts:

As Graças mostravam o cu  
Minerva tomava lição.  
Apolo toca o bitú  
Nas cordas do rabecüo ...

[The Graces showed their assholes  
Minerva learned a thing or two.  
Apollo played a *bitú*  
on the strings of the *rabecüo* ...]<sup>40</sup>

This demonstrates that *Mênstruo*, despite its elite origins, was equally at home in popular contexts. Therefore, just as the bowdlerization of Guimarães's erotic poetry revealed the underlying affinity between the obscene and the Romantic ideal, so too does exclusion from the canon and displacement into the popular sphere reveal an affinity between elite and popular classicisms.

Thus censorship, in inducing these unstable erotic dialectics between survival and destruction and fact and fiction, undermines the positivist national narratives it attempts to uphold. Guimarães exploits these tensions: as with the joke of the 'found document', which signposts make-believe through its blatant inconsistency, he exploits the contradictions created by censorship to reveal the fictionality of the national projects it serves. In this deconstruction of political narratives, Latin literature is especially potent, both due to its symbolic links to the colonial past and the contemporary rebranding of Brazil as a

37 C.f. Connie Bloomfield-Gadêlha, "The Graeco-Roman as an Arena for Conflict: Classical Reception, Popular Poetry and Power in Northeast Brazil", in *Transnational Perspectives on the Conquest and Colonization of Latin America*, eds. David Midgley, Jenny Mander, Christine Beaulé (New York: Routledge, 2019). These traditions are still vibrant today, though the use of classical mythology in improvised poetic contests has become rarer: see further Connie Bloomfield-Gadêlha, PhD diss., King's College London (in preparation).

38 Camilo, *Risos Entre Pares*, 80.

39 *Ibid.*, 77.

40 *Ibid.*, 78.

new Rome under Dom Pedro II, further facilitated by the fact that Ovid himself offers a paradigm of using unstable literary forms to negotiate state censorship.

### 3 Translation as Degeneration

While Guimarães uses archaeological themes to explore loss through censorship, he also explores the potential for loss of sense through translation. In nineteenth-century Brazil, there were concerns that translations from ancient Greek and Latin were degenerating the Portuguese language. Odorico Mendes's translations of Homer were judged by the influential critic Sílvio Romero in 1880 as 'monstrosities' written in a 'stuttering Portuguese',<sup>41</sup> while the above-mentioned Cândido compared them to bestiological verse and degenerative imagery. These concerns were exacerbated by connections between classical translation and erotic poetry. Guimarães's poetry is indeed typically called 'bocagean', referring to Bocage, known for his obscene, erotic, and burlesque verses, as well as for his translations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Moreover, Guimarães was writing during a more general literary crisis at the start of the nineteenth century, when Brazilian writers struggled to make classical models resonate with their times.<sup>42</sup>

Guimarães plays with these tensions by claiming at the start that *Mênstruo* was 'rendered into vulgar Latin by Simon of Nuntua'. This alludes to the best-selling French novel *Simon de Nantua* (1818) by Laurent de Jussieu, which was used in nineteenth-century Brazilian schools to teach morality.<sup>43</sup> The obscenity of the poem which follows thus subverts literary and moral codes received from Europe. This is underscored by the pun on the word 'vulgar'. While it can signify 'distasteful, obscene' as well as the non-standardized 'vulgar Latin' used during and after the classical period, 'vulgar' was also used to indicate modern romance languages, here used in a sense similar to the English word 'vernacular'. Jorge Luis Borges exploited this to call Spanish an 'illustrious dialect of Latin',<sup>44</sup> and Guimarães similarly implies that Portuguese is a 'vulgar' Latin, alluding both to his own obscene poem, and to the degeneration of classical models in Brazilian literature.

41 In Haroldo de Campos, *A Arte no Horizonte do Provável*, (São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 1969), 211.

42 Cândido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira*, 191.

43 Abreu, "Introduction: Fiction as an Element of Cultural Connection", 10.

44 Jorge Luis Borges, "The Thousand and One Nights", trans. Eliot Weinberger, *The Georgia Review*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (1984), 567. I owe this reference to Andrew Laird.

Having framed his poem as a translation, Guimarães continues to deconstruct literary sense by shifting between registers, creating an effect akin to translation. At times he uses a highly elevated style:

Da nacarada cona, em sutil fio,  
 corre pupúrea veia,  
 e nobre sangue do divino cono  
 as águas purpureia ...

[From the pearlescent cunt, in a subtle thread  
 ran a cochineal vein,  
 and the noble blood of the divine cunt  
 flushed the waters scarlet ...]

Whilst at others he uses rough colloquial speech, imitating the spoken rather than written word:

– “Ora porra” – gritou a deusa irada

[– “Oh, shit” – screamed the angry goddess]

These shifts in register, when performed, invite the embodiment of different *dramatis personae*, creating the illusion of transformative masks. As shown in this farcical representation of Venus, these transformations serve to destabilize societal norms, evoking Bakhtin's grotesque. In particular, for Bakhtin the mask is emblematic of the grotesque,<sup>45</sup> representing a state of transformation, ‘related to transition, metamorphoses, the violation of natural boundaries, to mockery ... parodies, caricatures’.<sup>46</sup> For this, Ovid, who has been called the ‘champion of a view of man as an actor, a role player’,<sup>47</sup> provides a fitting model. Moreover, the mask was a key Romantic motif,<sup>48</sup> and, Cândido argues, the key metaphor through which the convoluted identities of the Epicurean Society should be understood.<sup>49</sup>

45 Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 34.

46 *ibid.*, 40.

47 Philip Hardie, “Ovid and Early Imperial Literature”, 38.

48 Cf. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *The Masque of Anarchy* (London: Edward Moxton, 1832). For ‘a romantic anthropology of the mask’ in 19th closet drama, see Ana-Maria Ștefan, “Masks and the Romantic Historical Closet Drama: Lorenzaccio and Marino Faliero”, *Acta Iassyensia Comparationis* (2011).

49 Cândido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira*, 133.

Furthermore, the masquerade was central to the pornographic literature circulating between Europe and Brazil in the nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup> The writers themselves also enacted erotic masquerades: the most popular Portuguese erotic writer of the nineteenth century, Alfredo Gallis, masked his authorship behind various pseudonyms, including 'Rabelais' after the sixteenth century French writer (after whom the Epicurean Society named their verse 'Pantagruelic'), and 'Ulysses'.<sup>51</sup> Guimarães's pseudo-historical origins note similarly distances him from his own work, cloaking the poem in an effect akin to what Ezra Pound describes as 'a long series of translations which were but more elaborate masks'.<sup>52</sup> Guimarães strengthens this effect by pastiching other Lusophone translators of Latin and Ancient Greek classics, so that he masquerades as a plurality of voices. This further eroticises the theme of translation, since Guimarães primarily draws from Bocage, the writer infamous for his explicit verses. For example, in *Mênstruo*, when Cupid rescues Venus, he drives a 'rápida quadriga': the words used by Bocage for the Latin 'quadriugus' in his translation of the Phaethon episode from *Metamorphoses* 2.168. Guimarães again draws on Bocage's word choice in his *Metamorfoses* to describe Venus's blood as 'purpúrea', an archaizing word already outdated for Guimarães's audience. The effect is a linguistic disruption which draws attention to the erotic imagery in the poem. Whilst 'purpúrea' accentuates Venus's intimate wound, Guimarães repeatedly uses the word 'cono/a' (another antiquated word, from the Latin 'cunnus') for Venus's vulva, also used by Bocage in his pornographic poetry:

Beleza mais completa haver não pode  
Pois mesmo o cono seu, quando palpita  
Parece estar dizendo: "Fode, fode!"

[It is not possible to have a more complete beauty  
Even her cunt, when it throbs  
seems to be saying, "Fuck me, fuck me!"]

Thus, by embodying the voices of other Ovidian translators, Guimarães dons the erotic masquerade of the pseudonym, implicating classical translation in this performance of linguistic and moral degeneration.

<sup>50</sup> Mendes, "The Bachelor's Library", 91.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 81.

<sup>52</sup> Josephine Balmer, *Piecing Together the Fragments: Translating Classical Verse, Creating Contemporary Poetry* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 32.

#### 4 Moral Degeneration

Guimarães's combination of the erotic and the grotesque is especially concentrated in his representation of power figures. Bakhtin emphasises the prevalence of ritual deity mocking in the grotesque and carnivalesque,<sup>53</sup> through which the 'peculiar logic of the "inside out" ... continual shifting from top to bottom' is manifested.<sup>54</sup> Indeed, in *Mênstruo* Zeus is first introduced in Homeric style:

Ouviu-lhe estas palavras piedosas  
do Olimpo o Grão-Tonante,

[These pious words were heard  
by the Almighty Thunderer of Olympus,]

The strophe finishes, however, with a jarringly obscene couplet:

que em pívia ao sacana do Cupido  
comia nesse instante ...

[who was receiving a hand job  
from sleazy Cupid at that moment ...]

Here, erotic imagery destabilises the figures of power within the poem, which Guimarães encourages to be read politically by means of an Ovidian parallel. In *Mênstruo* the Olympic gods gather to receive Venus, and Jupiter then passes judgement on Galatea's crime, paralleling the council of the gods in Book I of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. This scene in the *Metamorphoses* is typically read as a political reference to the Roman Senate, with Jupiter representing a tyrannical Augustus.<sup>55</sup> This symmetry is underlined by a linguistic echo: Guimarães calls Jupiter 'Grão-Tonante', the Portuguese epithet coined by Bocage in his translation of the first book of the *Metamorphoses*. While Ovid uses the figure of Jupiter to critique the new Augustan state, Guimarães was disturbing the nationalistic idealism of previous Brazilian Romantic writers.<sup>56</sup> Guimarães's

53 Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, 5.

54 *Ibid.*, 10.

55 Cf. Vinzenz Buchheit, "Mythos und Geschichte in Ovids Metamorphosen I", *Hermes* 94 (1966), 80–108.

56 Norberto Perkoski, "A Transgressão em Bernardo Guimarães", *Revista Texto Poético* 10 (2014), 170.



audience would have been especially sensitive to the political undertones of his lewd humour; in Brazil, 'the nineteenth-century reader associated [pornographic texts] with sexual arousal, but also with political commentary',<sup>57</sup> evidenced by a political demonstration in the city of Maceió on the night of 16 March 1870, when erotic texts were graffitied on the walls with pornographic paintings of local leaders.<sup>58</sup>

Ovid destabilises power structures through the Latin theme of *militia amoris*, in which love is depicted as military service in order to subvert the gendered politics of Augustan Rome. Often, this is manifested as a genre conflict between the epic and elegiac, such as when, in *Amores* 1.1, Ovid is wounded by Venus's son, Cupid, who steals a metric foot, famously preventing him from singing epic and forcing him to compose elegy instead. Guimarães likewise stages genre tensions, with Venus's wound, flight to Zeus, and the mockery she receives from Minerva and Juno paralleling *Iliad* 5. Linguistic echoes from Odorico Mendes's translation of Homer, published a year before *Mênstruo*, underscore this symmetry:

a mão rascou mimosa

[she cut her tender hand]

MENDES, *Iliad* Book 5

A branca mão mimosa

[the tender white hand]

GUIMARÃES, *Mênstruo*

Ovid himself deals with this Homeric episode in the opening to Book IV of the *Fasti*, where he draws a parallel between Venus's wound and his own one which prevented him from writing epic in *Amores* 1.1. Guimarães establishes a more subversive parallel whereby the wound from Venus's hand is transferred to her vulva, which becomes 'mimosa' in echo of Mendes's Homer:

ia ferir a mais mimosa parte

[she would wound the most tender part]

GUIMARÃES, *Mênstruo*

57 Mendes, "The Bachelor's Library", 94.

58 *Ibid.*

Furthermore, the elegiac theme of *militia amoris* can be traced back to Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura*, where the union of Mars and Venus is used to represent the Empedoclean cosmic forces of Love and Strife:<sup>59</sup>

[...] belli fera moenera Mavors  
armipotens regit, in gremium qui saepe tuum se  
reiicit aeterno devictus vulnere amoris

1.32–4

(Mars mighty in battle rules the savage works of war, who often casts himself upon your [Venus's] lap wholly vanquished by the eternal wound of love)

Guimarães inverts the image so that Mars laments Venus's wound, destabilizing Lucretius's cosmic harmony. Furthermore, the union of Mars and Venus is a mythical paradigm of marital infidelity, another of which is Venus's son by Anchises, Aeneas. Thus Guimarães combines the adulterous wound of Venus's encounter with Mars with the equally adulterous prospect of Venus preparing to meet Anchises, lending this cosmic disruption a distinctly moral component.

The emphasis on moral disruption is exacerbated by Guimarães's carnivalesque representation of the feminine, which was highly idealized in earlier Romanticism. Guimarães provocatively casts his Venus as grotesquely sex-obsessed:

Ai! Um mês sem foder! Que atroz suplício ...

[Ai! A month without fucking! What terrible suffering ...]

Moreover, the mythological theme evokes the classical Muses of literary inspiration, whom Guimarães was accused of 'prostitut[ing]'.<sup>60</sup> Guimarães's 'prostituted' Venus thus subverts the gendered nationalist narratives as well as representing the moral and literary degeneration symptomatic of the contemporary crisis in classical imitation.

Guimarães emphasises Venus's transgressive sexuality in the description of her wound. Erotic wounds and sexual violence in Ovid can serve to destabilize

59 Cf. Donncha O'Rourke, "Lovers in Arms: Empedoclean Love and Strife in Lucretius and the Elegists", *Dictynna: Revue de Poétique Latine*, no. 11 (December 2014), 2.

60 Camilo, *Risos Entre Pares*, 80.

gender identity, since the elegiac lover himself is often wounded in the pursuit of his mistress,<sup>61</sup> when not – as in *Amores* 1.7 – causing pain to her himself. Guimarães exploits this in a description of Venus's menstrual blood, deviating into a story reminiscent of the digressions in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

(É fama que quem bebe dessas águas  
     jamais perde a tensão  
 e é capaz de foder noites e dias,  
     até no cu de um cão!)

[(Rumor has it that that whoever drinks these waters  
 never loses their tension  
 and is able to fuck night and day,  
 even a dog's arse!)]

This evokes the gender destabilizing episode in the *Metamorphoses* when Hermaphroditus merges with the nymph Salamacis whilst swimming, and curses:

quisquis in hos fontes vir venerit, exeat inde  
 semivir et tactis subito mollescat in undis.

‘whoever comes to these springs as a man, let him leave half a man, and  
 soften suddenly at the touch of these waters!’

*Met.* 4.385–88

Guimarães inverts this story, so that Venus's ‘water’ instead enhances sexual virility, though to a dehumanizing extreme: ‘fuck night and day, even a dog's ass!’ Significantly, this aetiology is an intertextual joke with Guimarães's other erotic poem, *O Elixir do Pajé*, which tells the story of an impotent indigenous shaman who concocts a viagra-like ‘elixir’. This poem is widely understood to be a satiric parody of nationalistic Romantic novels which idealized indigenous cultures.<sup>62</sup> Guimarães, then, undermines this gendered national project, rendering the feminine grotesque, and the masculine either absurdly virile or else impotent.

61 Alison Sharrock, “Gender and Sexuality”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, ed. Philip Hardie (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 98.

62 Carlos Eduardo Lima Machado, “Bernardo Guimarães: A Exceção Pelo Risco”, *Revista USP*, n. 74, pp. 174–187, (June/August, 2007), 176.

## 5 De-Generation as Infertility

Guimarães expands his attack on nationalist politics through allusions to the *Aeneid*, the founding epic of Rome. In *Mênstruo*, Rome cannot be founded, since Venus had planned that ‘ia gerar naquela heróica foda / o grande e pio Enéias’ [she would in that heroic fuck engender the great and pious Aeneas], when the accident renders her vagina useless ‘por mais de um mês’ [for more than a month]. Here, Guimarães writes against Ovid’s depiction of Venus as the abundantly fertile ‘alma mater’ in the *Fasti* (as also in Lucretius’s *De Rerum Natura* 1.2):

illa satis causas arboribusque dedit:

...

quid genus omne creat volucrum, nisi blanda voluptas?  
nec coeant pecudes, si levis absit amor.

[She gave the crops and trees their first roots:

...

What but sweet pleasure creates all the race of birds?  
Cattle wouldn’t mate, if gentle love were absent.]

*Fasti* 4.96–100

By contrast, through an aetiological structure borrowed from the *Fasti*, Guimarães gives menstrual blood, potentially symbolic of fertility, an origin story based on infecundity. Moreover, this evokes Ovid’s horror when his lover, Corinna, undergoes an abortion in the *Amores*:

Si Venus Aenean gravida temerasset in alvo,  
Caesaribus tellus orba futura fuit.

If Venus had desecrated her belly, pregnant with Aeneas,  
Earth would have been bereft of future Caesars.

*Am.* 2.14.17–18

Guimarães thus combines and inverts elements from across the Ovidian corpus: Corinna’s abortion is combined with allusions to Venus as fertility goddess from the *Fasti*, with an effect analogous to Ovid’s wound and stolen ‘foot’ in *Amores* 1.1 which keeps him from composing epic. In *Mênstruo*, Venus herself receives the wound, which prevents both the elegiac, since she cannot have sex, and the epic, since Aeneas, the epic founding father of Rome, cannot be

conceived. Guimarães thus interweaves scandalous frankness about difficult gynaecological issues from the *Amores* with the metaphysical aetiologies of the *Fasti*, resulting in the premature termination of the epic *Aeneid*. This carnivalesque deconstruction of poetic forms encapsulates Guimarães's view on literary degeneration; he lamented that Daphnis's grove had become barren because in Brazil, 'only coffee, sugar and smoke matter', relegating the Muses to the margins.<sup>63</sup>

Moreover, Guimarães's equation of sexual wounds with literary impotence evokes the episode of Philomela in Book VI of the *Metamorphoses*. Philomela's rapist cuts out her tongue to prevent her from communicating the violation, so that rape is translated into linguistic violence. Guimarães marks a parallel between his story and that of Philomela through the description of Venus's blood: 'em sutil fio, corre pupúrea veia' [in a subtle thread ran a cochineal vein]. The metaphor of a 'subtle thread' seems unusual for a gushing wound, but echoes Castilho's translation of Philomela weaving, through which she communicates her rape to her sister:

Sutil, cândida teia urdindo a furto,  
Entre alvos fios põe purpúreas letras,

[Subtly, weaving the crime upon the white loom,  
she places cochineal letters between the white threads]

CASTILHO, *Met.* 6.578–9

Guimarães thus identifies Venus's intimate wound with Philomela's attempts at non-vocal communication, so that menstrual blood represents a search for expression in the face of linguistic insufficiency. This is underscored by both Ovid's (*Met.* 6.194, 248–50) and Guimarães's description of this sexual violence as 'infando' [unutterable]. Indeed, critics have read *Mênstruo* as an allegory for violence against linguistic enunciation,<sup>64</sup> evidenced by Guimarães's deliberately nonsensical style and irreverence for the literary canon.<sup>65</sup> To this we might add Guimarães's concerns with untranslatability and the violence of censorship, which can both render literature 'infando'.

This linguistic violence can be linked to bestiological and Pantagruelic verse, as a 'genre which feeds itself on a sort of "amputation" imposed upon the word,

63 Camilo, *Risos Entre Pares*, 70.

64 Perkowski, "A Transgressão em Bernardo Guimarães", 184.

65 Camilo in Correa 2006, 86.

in which sense is entirely absent'.<sup>66</sup> This is exemplified in the opening and closing lines of *Mênstruo*, which grotesquely distort literary norms to create poetic nonsense. The first line imitates an original Latin text:

Stava Vênus gentil junto da fonte

[Gentle Venus stood by the fountain]

It is written in neoclassical metre, uses standard classical imagery of a fountain, evoking a *locus amoenus*, and 'Vênus gentil' recalls the benevolent 'alma' Venus of Ovid's *Fasti* 4.1 and Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* 1.2. This opening line also parodies the well-known thirteenth-century Catholic hymn, also in Latin, which begins:<sup>67</sup>

Stabat mater dolorosa  
juxta Crucem lacrimosa

[The mournful mother  
stood by the cross weeping]

Guimarães weaves together two major cultural codes of early modern Brazil, the classical and the Catholic, placing Venus and the Virgin Mary in parallel to produce a nonsensical incongruity.

This semantic multiplicity is reinforced by a reference to Castilho. Alongside his translations of Ovid, Castilho wrote *Cartas de Echo e Narciso* [Letters of Echo and Narcissus] (1821), in which he expands the original romance found in the *Metamorphoses*. The words of the first line of Guimarães's poem appear as a repeat motif throughout *Cartas de Echo e Narciso*:

Sim: Náíade gentil; o dia inteiro  
Passei junto da fonte a contemplar-te

[Yes, gentle Naiad; I spent the whole day  
by the fountain contemplating you]

CASTILHO 1836, 137

66 *ibid.*

67 I owe this reference to Alessio Santoro.

Moreover, Castilho ends his *Cartas* with a fictional trial at the 'Supreme Tribunal of Cythera', in which he defends his erotic work against potential censors, again using theatrics to interrogate censorship. Thus Guimarães situates his shifting poetic language within the equally elusive tradition of classical imitation, a masquerade with a close association to the evasion of censorship. Guimarães accentuates this duplicitousness right at the start of the poem by undercutting the poem's modest pretensions with the second line of its opening couplet:

Stava Vênus gentil junto da fonte  
 [Gentle Venus stood by the fountain]  
 fazendo o seu pentelho,  
 [shaving her pubes]

This discordance is reinforced by the alternating line-lengths, which echoes Latin elegiac. Ovid exploits this structure to joke that Cupid 'stole a foot' from his second line, transforming decorous epic hexameter into an erotic elegiac couplet (*Am.* 1.1.4). Likewise, Guimarães's longer first line is transformed into an erotic couplet by the shorter second. The joke is subtly underlined by the final word '*pentelho*', where, in Latin, the difference between *pentameter* and hexameter is manifested.<sup>68</sup>

This transgressive duplicity is accentuated in the closing images of the poem, which again mix religious and literary codes:

Amém! Amém! com voz atroadora  
 os deuses todos urram!  
 E os ecos das olímpicas abóbadas,  
 Amém! Amém! Sussurram ...

['Amen! Amen!', the gods all roar  
 with thundering voice!  
 And the echoes of the Olympic vaults  
 whisper back, 'Amen! Amen!' ...]

The 'Stabat Mater' hymn likewise ends in a chorus of 'amen'. Here, however, the incongruous image of the pagan gods and their Olympian home echoing 'amen' generates a 'Pantagruelic' absurdity which undermines both the Catholic and classical canons. Moreover, this subversive 'echo' and 'whispering

68 I am grateful to Philip Hardie for pointing out this metrical wordplay.

back' evokes the episode of Echo and Narcissus from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which has an established tradition in Catholic Ibero-American literature, notably, for instance, *El Divino Narciso* (1689), the baroque religious *auto* by renowned Mexican poet-nun Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.<sup>69</sup> Guimarães here invokes this tradition of Latin and Catholic syncretism, yet does so within an obscene poem which deconstructs the ability of either element to command authority in nineteenth-century Brazil.

This canonical deconstruction is further bolstered by the undertones of sexual and literary infecundity in Echo and Narcissus's story. Here, Narcissus, who wastes away through lustful self-obsession, recalls the self-marginalized Epicurean Society, which foregrounded themes of corruptive introversion and degeneration.<sup>70</sup> Whilst Narcissus's impossible lust prevents him from having a productive sexual relationship, Echo's inability to generate original speech, and her resort to imitation, is a linguistic infertility which evokes the linguistic violence allegorized by Venus's menstrual blood. Furthermore, in Guimarães's contemporary context, with Brazilian independence still recent, the figure of Echo is an apt metaphor for the colonial allegation that Brazil was not able to generate, but only imitate Europe. Indeed, the nineteenth-century rejection of the previous century's Eurocentric neoclassical forms was largely a rejection of this prejudice.<sup>71</sup> The careful engagement with these debates is underscored by the linguistic echo of Castilho's piece of neoclassical imitation, *Cartas de Echo e Narciso*, in the first line of *Mênstruo*. The poem is thus bookended by imagery of infertility and classical imitation, so that it becomes a grotesque echo: a poem which both reproduces European models and terminates their influence, regurgitating them in a perverted and sterile form.

## 6 Regeneration and Repurposing

Guimarães's subversive reinterpretation of the relationship between Brazil and Europe was precursor to the major discussions surrounding independent Brazilian literary forms in the twentieth century. The grotesque regurgitation of Latin models is echoed in Oswald de Andrade's celebrated *Manifesto Antropófago* ['Cannibalist Manifesto'] (1928), which reformulated Brazilian

69 Cf. Ignacio Osorio Romero, *Conquistar el eco: la paradoja de la conciencia criolla* (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1989); Luisa Campuzano, *Narciso y Eco: tradición clásica y literatura latinoamericana* (Buenos Aires: Editorial La Bohemia, 2006).

70 Alves, *O Belo e O Disforme*, 82.

71 Cândido, *Formação da Literatura Brasileira*, 12.



culture from the digestion of its varied influences. Andrade's manifesto brought the preoccupation with the degeneration and regeneration of the Western canon, which had been brewing for over a century through writers such as Guimarães, to the forefront of Brazilian cultural conversations, the effects of which were felt across the globe. Fittingly, then, Guimarães's censored poetry was 'rediscovered' by the modernist *avant-garde* poet and translator Haroldo de Campos in his own manifesto, *A Arte no Horizonte do Provável* ['Art on the Horizon of the Probable'] (1963). De Campos includes Guimarães's poetry in his alternative account of Brazilian literature, constructed from 'fragments' and writers who had been 'unceremoniously pushed to the margins', but who represented 'definitive contribution[s] to the renovation of forms in our poetry'.<sup>72</sup> Guimarães's *Mênstruo* achieves precisely that: building upon Ovid's radically novel *Metamorphoses*, which begins, 'in nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora' [I want to speak of bodies changed into new forms], Guimarães's reworking both deconstructs and politically repurposes the Latin tradition, framed within a chain of archaeological and translational metamorphoses.

Indeed, translation – which underpins both Guimarães's poem and de Campos's manifesto – is itself a metamorphic regeneration, envisaged by Walter Benjamin as the 'afterlife' of a text.<sup>73</sup> This idea has especial importance for 'Latin American writers who are seeking both to develop and extend European models and simultaneously create completely new, independent works'.<sup>74</sup> In *Mênstruo*, this process is convoluted: Guimarães inverts the order, 'translating' a poem that did not before exist, so that the afterlife is the moment of the text's origin,<sup>75</sup> thereby collapsing teleological linearity. Thus the erotic dialectics of loss and preservation, invoked by Guimarães in his archaeological and translational framing, are radically compressed into the present, through which colonial influences from the Old World become equalized with the new. This is encapsulated in the final echoing lines of *Mênstruo*, which reverberate beyond the poem in the cyclical repetitions of 'amen' and final ellipsis, neutralizing original and copy. Furthermore, Guimarães is in turn used by de Campos in what he describes as a 'synchronous' view of Brazilian literary history, which privileges aesthetic parallels over chronology, so that 'Homer is

72 Haroldo de Campos, *A Arte no Horizonte do Provável e outros ensaios* (São Paulo: Editora Perspectiva, 1969), 209.

73 'The Task of the Translator', in *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1973).

74 Edwin Gentzler, *Translation and Identity in the Americas: New Directions in Translation Theory* (London: Routledge, 2008), xii.

75 Cf. Ruthven, *Faking Literature*, 15.

Pound's contemporary'.<sup>76</sup> By this means, de Campos aligns Guimarães with the Surrealist movement – an idea also echoed by Cândido, who concludes that Pantagruelic poetry is the 'face of modernity'.<sup>77</sup> Thus *Mênstruo*, nearly lost forever, was given a new life and a new form, in a regenerative transmission that parallels the mercurial poem itself.

## 7 Conclusion

This peculiar poem, which might at first seem a light-hearted pornographic game, is a brilliant fusion of elements drawn from across the spectrum of Ovid's work. Moreover, Guimarães's use of Ovid as a paradigm to explore his own relationship to the Brazilian canon both directly engages with and disfigures the reception of the classical tradition in nineteenth-century Brazil.

Perhaps most importantly, *Mênstruo* and its precarious transmission offers an acute insight into what was at stake for Brazilian writers engaging with and subverting classical European models in the mid-nineteenth century. The oscillations in the poem's style, tone, and reception illuminate the tensions that affected much of Brazil's nineteenth-century writing and art: the challenge of simultaneously reinterpreting its past, and, as is evident in the actions of Dom Pedro II, recreating its future from many of the same classical tools. Indeed, this temporal instability epitomises Billings's formulation of reception as erotic dialectics between loss and restitution, which are 'essential moments in modern self-definition through antiquity'.<sup>78</sup> This is magnified in the poem's most recent transformation, in which de Campos's theoretical work on syncretic translation shows how *Mênstruo* can be read as a destabilizing reception which collapses teleological barriers, with the result that Ovid and Guimarães contemporaneously perform the grotesque metamorphoses of old forms into new. In this, *Mênstruo* emerges as an important early manifestation of post-colonial literary de/re-generation, which paved the way for twentieth-century Brazilian modernism.

<sup>76</sup> De Campos, *A Arte no Horizonte do Provável*, 208. The Caribbean writer Derek Walcott similarly said, 'if you think of art as simultaneity ... then Joyce is a contemporary of Homer', in *The Poetics of Derek Walcott: Intertextual Perspectives*, ed. Gregson Davis (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 240.

<sup>77</sup> Cândido, *O Discurso e a Cidade*, 229.

<sup>78</sup> Joshua Billings, "Hyperion's symposium: an erotics of reception", 21.

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## Heaven and Hell: Classical Rhetoric and Courtly Wit in Early Modern Brazil – The Case of Gregório de Matos

*Artur Costrino*

For (and because of) João Adolfo Hansen

• • •

Eu sou aquele, que passados os anos,  
Cantei na minha lira maldizente  
Torpezas do Brasil, vícios e enganós.

[I am he who, as the years went by,  
sang on my slandering lyre  
of Brazil's baseness, deceits, and vices.]

GREGÓRIO DE MATOS, *Aos Vícios* ['To Vices']<sup>1</sup>

• •

During the first centuries of the European occupation of Brazil, there were two main fronts of action undertaken by the Portuguese in the new American context. The settlers mostly took Pau-Brasil wood and sent it back to Europe, built sugar mills, and, in time, began mining gold; meanwhile, Jesuit priests built churches and schools and strove to convert indigenous Brazilians to the Catholic faith. These two different but at the same time complementary movements led European control over Brazil to be established: the new territory was in political, economic, and cultural terms totally dependent on the will of the Portuguese, with the indigenous populations who lived there being

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<sup>1</sup> Gregório de Matos, *Poemas atribuídos*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2013), 29. All translations from works of secondary literature in this chapter are mine. The translations of the poems are together with Maya Feile Tómes.

(in most cases) rapidly isolated, enslaved, or murdered by the settlers.<sup>2</sup> Given their Catholic faith, European civilizations in general – and in this case the Portuguese in particular – had difficulties in understanding and acknowledging the indigenous inhabitants of America as people with a soul and, as such, as beings who should not be murdered or enslaved.<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, there was no real interest in comprehending the indigenous culture, other than to use it against the natives, thereby aiding the process of catechization.<sup>4</sup> In the project of acculturating Brazil's indigenous inhabitants and the necessity of educating the children of the local elite, the Jesuit schools became the most prominent centres for education in the territory. With them, the classical authors who had come to be in circulation in the fifteenth century and had been adopted by the Jesuits in their curriculum – including Aphthonius of Antioch, Longinus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Hermogenes of Tarsus, and Demetrius of Phalerum, among many others – were introduced, read, studied, and imitated in Brazil, too.<sup>5</sup>

It is amid this context of economic exploitation and cultural animosity that we find the subject of our chapter. Our focus is on Gregório de Matos e Guerra, Brazil's most famous poet prior to independence in 1822. It is our goal to demonstrate how classical works become transformed and adapted as a mode by courtly society in Europe until reaching a poet far removed from the court and yet who nevertheless managed to compose courtly poetry in many genres and styles, from the most sublime lyrical compositions to the lowest satirical pieces, the latter earning de Matos the nickname 'Boca do Inferno' ['Mouth of Hell']. His poetry is not only geographically distant from the usual places with which the satirical style was associated, but also comes to life through an indirect adaptation of classical authors, Cicero, Aristotle, Quintilian, Juvenal, and Horace foremost among them. These authors were read and taken as a model for composition by poets and writers of the court – such as Camões, Petrarch, Dante, and Góngora – all around Europe, then adapted and emulated

2 Darcy Ribeiro, *O Povo Brasileiro* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995), 42–56.

3 For example, Montaigne's essay, *On Cannibals*, and the dialogue, *Diálogo sobre a Conversão dos Gentios* (*On the Conversion of the Heathens*) by Jesuit Priest Manuel da Nóbrega, in which the central argument revolves around the question of whether or not native people have souls and whether they should therefore be enslaved or converted to Christianity.

4 João Adolfo Hansen, "Anchieta: Poesia em tupi e produção da alma", *Moderno de nasença: figuras críticas do Brasil* (São Paulo: 2006): 11–26.

5 The Jesuit method of studies, known as the *Ratio Studiorum*, bore primary responsibility for introducing classical knowledge to the new continent. This educational system, focusing on classical authors and heavily dependent on classical rhetoric, shaped the minds of virtually all authors born in Brazil (and across a vast swathe of Europe as well) from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.

in a distant land by Gregório de Matos, who displays many of the same characteristics of other Latin American poets of the time,<sup>6</sup> yet at the same time raises some issues of his own, mainly due to the circulation of his work and the uncertainties as to authorship.

• • •

Gregório de Matos e Guerra was born in Salvador, then the capital of Brazil, on 23 December 1636. Hailing from a wealthy family (his father was the owner of a mill), he studied at a Jesuit school until the age of fourteen, after which – following the established pattern for continuing education of the time – he was sent to Lisbon. Between 1652 and to 1661, he studied Canon Law at the University of Coimbra, Portugal's premier university. Between 1663 to 1682, he acted as a judge (known for publishing his sentences in verse!) and attorney in Portugal prior to returning to his hometown in Brazil. In 1694 he was exiled to Angola due to political problems, but returned to Brazil in 1695, dying there the following year. During his lifetime, he acquired the nickname 'Hell's Mouth' because, when he spoke, he gave voice to all the sins of individuals and societies. Although this brief summary of his life gives the impression that the trajectory of his career is fairly well known, in fact nothing could be further from the truth. Other than the official information we find in the records – primarily a few scattered signatures – everything regarding de Matos's adventures comes from a biography or 'life' written by Manuel Pereira Rabelo in the first half of the eighteenth century.<sup>7</sup> As the 'life' is a fictional genre, it was composed in accordance with the commonplaces of the epideictic genre in an attempt to match the content of the poems Rabelo had collected to illustrate de Matos's life.<sup>8</sup> This means that we essentially have no reliable information regarding the life and mental world of the poet. Furthermore, as we will see below, we cannot even consider Gregório de Matos's poems to be the work of a single individual.

6 I would like to draw attention here to the *Góngora Global* project led by Mercedes Blanco *et alii*. See particularly Antonio Carreira, "Góngora en los orígenes de la poesía brasileña", *Bulletin hispanique*, 120–1, 2018, 11–26; see also Luis Castellví Laukamp, *Hispanic Baroque Ekphrasis: Góngora, Camargo, Sor Juana* (Cambridge: Legenda, 2019) and Ana Paula Silva, "Góngora e Gregório de Matos: o gênero epidítico em três pares de sonetos" (Master's diss., Universidade de São Paulo, 2009).

7 Manuel Pereira Rabelo, "Vida e Morte do Excelente Poeta Lírico, o Doutor Gregório de Matos e Guerra", ed. James Amado, 7 vols. vol. VII, *Obras Completas de Gregório de Matos e Guerra*. (Salvador: Janaína, 1968).

8 João Adolfo Hansen, *A Sátira e o Engenho* (São Paulo: Editora da Unicamp, 2004), 29–33.



Trying to understand the poetry of Gregório de Matos is like trying to comprehend many poets at once: as with many other poetic *corpora* where originals mingle dizzyingly with the work of imitators – one thinks, for instance, of the Anacreontic poems, among many others – it is impossible to know what exactly was written by him and what was produced in the same style by other poets.<sup>9</sup> This is because the first extant collection of his poems was produced by the aforementioned Rabelo, who, following the procedure of other European scholars, compiled the poems circulating orally or individually in Bahia during the seventeenth century, attributing them to Gregório de Matos e Guerra and using selected elements from them as the basis on which to compose his ‘life’ of the poet. We currently know that, amid the pages collected by Rabelo, there are some poems composed by Gregório de Matos, but a considerable – yet unknowable – number was composed by anonymous writers emulating the style of Hell’s Mouth. Poems composed by famous Portuguese poets of the time – such as António Barbosa Bacelar, Violante do Céu, Francisco de Vasconcelos, Jerônimo Baía and even translations of Spanish poems by the likes of Luis de Góngora – also featured, circulating in Brazil under the name of Gregório de Matos. We have, then, our first issue: since de Matos never published his poems in any way – on the contrary, many collections of his poems were found, scattered, only several years after his death and so his ‘works’ are instead often drawn from the oral tradition, meaning that some of the poems exist in different versions – we cannot choose (nor should we) which version or collection represents the ‘original’ or ‘definitive’ version, nor can we know, among the numerous attributions, which poems were actually by him. This particularity sets him apart from other Brazilian and Latin American authors of the same period because, while we can be sure that de Matos was familiar with classical literature and courtly poetry, the same cannot necessarily be said of the other poets who produced all the many poems attributed to him. It is fair to assume that at least some of the poems which constitute ‘his’ *oeuvre* were composed orally by people far less formally educated who were not versed in classical literature or courtly poetry at all. This means that classical receptions in his work have (at least) two layers: the formal layer of a system of education and courtly behavior heavily dependent on the interpretation, adaptation, and redeployment of classical authors, and a second layer of interpretation and emulation by anonymous people who were far from the court and perhaps also from the sphere of classical education.

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9 João Adolfo Hansen, “Autoria, Obra e Público na Poesia Colonial Luso-Brasileira atribuída a Gregório de Matos”, *Ellipsis* 12 (June 2014), 91–117.

On the other hand, studying poets writing in the style of Gregório de Matos is almost akin to studying one poet.<sup>10</sup> They were bound by a certain mould of composition, ultimately deriving (whether they knew it or not) from a particular way of reading and interpreting classical texts. The mould in question is what is referred to as 'wit'. It consists in a combination of the reception of classical poetry (and philosophy) blended together with the standards of early modern courtly behavior, deeply imbricated with Counter-Reformation principles and fostered by the education provided by those Jesuit priests who had been active since the inception of the Order.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, in an effort to understand how the Classics acquired new meaning in terms of upholding a moral code specific to anti-Lutheran Catholic monarchies during the early modern period in Europe and the New World, we need to dive into the reception of classical thinking in the courtly world of the seventeenth century, and its peculiarities in Brazil and in our poet in particular.

There is a famous anecdote regarding Gregório de Matos which serves as an illustration of the method of composition in the 'witty' style. Once, a less skilful poet, Rocha Pita, asked de Matos for a word that rhymed with 'mim' ['me']. De Matos swiftly replied 'capim' (a type of grass consumed exclusively by horses).<sup>12</sup> Hell's Mouth, therefore, had met the request at the same time as insulting Rocha Pita. The process thus entails finding a correspondence between two or more elements which appear to have nothing in common. We will see it being used extensively in seventeenth-century poetry, especially in the lyric and satirical genres.

The laws of this 'wit' (known in Portuguese – and Spanish – as '*agudeza*', and in other languages by terms such as *conchetto*, *argutezza*, *acutezza*, *Witz*, and *pointe*)<sup>13</sup> were developed by seventeenth-century theoreticians including Matteo Peregrini, Sforza Pallavicino, Baltasar Gracián, and Emanuele Tesauro. Their theory of wit came to explain a practice common in court societies, of which the origins can be traced to the rhetorical education provided by the Jesuits in Catholic environments. The precepts around which it revolved were based on interpretations of Aristotle's *De Anima*, *Poetics*, and *Rhetoric* as well as Longinus's *On the Sublime* and works by other classical rhetoricians.

10 For the Portuguese poets of the period, cf. Pécora, *Poesia Seiscentista*, 2002.

11 João Adolfo Hansen, "Retórica da Agudeza", *Letras Clássicas* 4 (October 2000), 317–342.

12 This anecdote is recounted by Manuel Pereira Rabelo in his life of the poet and is part of the legend of Gregório de Matos, having been retold and discussed by many scholars. Cf. Hansen, *O Discreto*.

13 Other terms used in Portuguese for the same concept include *sutileza*, *argúcia*, *conceito engenhoso*, *conceito*, *entimema*, *silogismo retórico*: Hansen, "Retórica da Agudeza", 319.

In their texts, they define wit as a type of metaphor which is the result of the same intellectual ingenuity that evinces 'effective beauty'; in other words, a sudden unexpected effect that surprises, pleases, and persuades.<sup>14</sup> On the subject of witty metaphor, Rodrigo Cacho writes:

The most pointed out virtue of the metaphor is its capacity to condense in one single word many ideas at the same time, thereby blurring the semantic frontiers that set them apart.<sup>15</sup>

Those who hear or read it must, of course, possess the same intellectual ingenuity as the poet in order to recognize and be struck by it. As an example, John Donne was famous for his wit and, in his poem *The Flea*, talks about the insect as both a 'temple' and a 'bed': as it contains the blood of the man and his beloved – for marriage entails the fusion of blood that is consummated in a bed – it follows that the flea is a temple. The poet has found a similarity between a flea and marriage, two things that would not ordinarily seem to have much in common.<sup>16</sup> Donne's poem is a good example of Baltasar Gracián's comment, in his *Agudeza y Arte de Ingenio* of 1644, illustrating the nature of wit:

This conceptual artifice consists of an exquisite agreement, in a harmonic correlation between two or three extreme perceptible terms, expressed by an act of the intellect.<sup>17</sup>

Let us take an example from Gregório de Matos:

A vós correndo vou, braços sagrados,  
Nessa cruz sacrossanta descobertos  
Que, para receber-me, estais abertos,  
E, por não castigar-me, estais cravados.

[To you I go running, sacred arms,  
so bare on this holy cross;  
you are spread wide to receive me  
and nailed down lest you punish me.

A vós, divinos olhos, eclipsados  
De tanto sangue e lágrimas abertos,

To you, divine eyes, beclouded  
by so much blood and tears, yet open,

<sup>14</sup> Hansen, "Retórica da Agudeza", 317.

<sup>15</sup> Rodrigo Cacho Casal, *La Esfera del Ingenio: Las Silvas de Quevedo y la tradición europea* (Madrid: Editorial Biblioteca Nueva, 2013), 27.

<sup>16</sup> For a more complete and remarkable analysis of this poem, cf. Silveiras, *Nenhum Homem é uma ilha*, 2015, pp. 208–220.

<sup>17</sup> Baltazar Gracián, *Agudeza y Arte de Ingenio* (1669), 1167.

Pois, para perdoar-me, estais despertos,  
E, por não condenar-me, estais fechados.

since, to forgive me, you are awake,  
and, lest you condemn me, closed.

A vós, pregados pés, por não deixar-me,  
A vós, sangue vertido, para ungir-me,  
A vós, cabeça baixa, p'ra chamar-me.

To you, feet pinioned lest you leave me,  
to you, blood shed to anoint me,  
to you, bowed head, to call me.

A vós, lado patente, quero unir-me,  
A vós, cravos preciosos, quero atar-me,  
Para ficar unido, atado e firme.

To you, exposed flank, I'd join myself,  
to you, precious nails, I'd bind myself,  
to be joined, bound, and steadfast.]

This lyrical sonnet is one of the many religious pieces written by de Matos or attributed to him. As we can see, there is no narrative element. Rather, it is in the description of the holy cross that the poet finds the elements to build wit and persuade his reader. In the first stanza, the poet searches for the meaning of the open and nailed arms of Christ. The process is quick and effective:<sup>18</sup> openness = receiving while nailed = refraining from movement. The reader's knowledge of the story of Christ will act as the bridge between concepts, generating a feeling of wonder; it is this that will persuade the reader to believe that this is the actual meaning of the nailed open arms on the cross. Having established his *modus operandi*, the poet may move on ever quicker and with fewer written connections between the elements expressed, relying increasingly on the knowledge and interpretation of the reader. In the second quartet, the poet introduces the anaphoric element '*a vós*' ['to you'] that will be repeated in the pair of tercets to build the climax and final stroke of wit of the poem. He invests the eclipsed eyes of Christ with a theological meaning in the same way as he did in the prior stanza: probing the concepts of 'opening' and 'closing' and ascribing to each the actions of forgiving and condemning. Then, availing himself of the same anaphoric effect, the poet quickly builds meaning between the feet, blood, and head of Christ, along with other elements of the mission of Jesus: not leaving, anointing, and calling. Finally, in the last tercet, the anaphoric effect continues to build up a sensation almost of praying to reach the climax when the anaphora stops, while the meaning of restraint, binding and fastening now acquire a positive sense as they represent the firmness of faith.

18 For a discussion of how the effect of wit must be quick, see Hansen, *Retórica da Agudeza*, 320.

The biblical subject, the descriptive style, and the sudden effect of the process of wit may all seem rather distant from what one might expect from a discussion of the reception of Classics in early modern Brazil, as classical poetry does not seem to obey any similar criteria.<sup>19</sup> However, classical reception here does not reside in the poetic canon itself, but rather in how philosophy and rhetoric were used to create these poems.

Wit, according to the theorists listed above, can come from ingenious intellect (as in the example above), from *furore*, or from practice. These three types are an adaptation of Longinus's *On the Sublime*. In Chapter VIII, Longinus outlines five sources for the sublime: lofty thoughts, strong emotion (these two are believed to be innate to a person and less affected by practical precepts as the next three), a particular way of assembling figures of speech and thought, nobility of expression, and composition with dignity and elevation. These five sources were condensed into the aforementioned three and adapted to a method that could be applied to all genres of poetry and prose, high and low.<sup>20</sup>

The first type – whereby wit derives from comparison between distant concepts – corresponds to the first part of rhetoric: the *inuentio*. When comparing the concepts, reason decomposes them dialectically to establish resemblances and differences between them. It analyses the terms and joins them into a new and unexpected meaning that causes astonishment. Because wit comes from analysis and expression, i.e. dialectical and rhetorical operations, it came to be known as ‘dialectical embellishment’.<sup>21</sup> Let us consider another example drawn from de Matos's lyrical and devotional poetry, this time with the creation of a witty conceit revolving around part of a statue – a baby's arm – that was found on the ground:

O todo sem a parte não é todo,  
A parte sem o todo não é parte,  
Mas se a parte o faz todo, sendo parte,  
Não se diga, que é parte, sendo todo.

[The whole, without the part, is not whole,  
the part, without the whole, is not part,  
but if the part makes the whole, albeit a part,  
let it not be termed a part when it's the whole.

19 However, it is necessary to note that Martial was not only regarded as a witty poet in antiquity but was also frequently used as an example for witty composition in the Renaissance: see Patricia A. Watson, “Ignorant Euctus: Wit and Literary Allusion in Martial 8.6” (Brill: Mnemosyne, February 1998), pp. 30–40.

20 Longinus, *On the Sublime*, ed. William Rhys Roberts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907), 57–8.

21 Hansen, “Retórica da Agudeza”, 318.

Em todo o sacramento está Deus todo,	In the whole sacrament God is wholly present,
E todo assiste inteiro em qualquer parte,	and dwells wholly in every part,
E feito em partes todo em toda a parte,	and split into parts in all parts,
Em qualquer parte sempre fica o todo.	remains ever whole in every part.

O braço de Jesus não seja parte,	Let the arm of Jesus not be a part,
Pois que feito Jesus em partes todo,	for, split in His entirety into parts,
Assiste cada parte em sua parte.	He dwells for His part in every part.

Não se sabendo parte deste todo,	Obliviously a part of this whole,
Um braço, que lhe acharam, sendo parte,	an arm of His that was found, though a part,
Nos disse as partes todas deste todo. <sup>22</sup>	Imparted all the parts of this whole.]

What was split into pieces was a statue. The poet, however, deconstructs not the broken statue but the concept of God so as to establish a similarity between it and the piece of a statue found on the ground. The poet here follows Petrarch's scheme for the sonnet, moving from the universal to the particular.<sup>23</sup> However, he wittily takes advantage of the format to 'prove to' (or persuade) the reader that the arm of the statue – the particular – is a part that proves the existence of God, the whole. Astonishment is induced in the reader through the alternation of the words "part" and "whole", with the author guiding the audience to the realization that an arm that has been found can only belong to a statue of Jesus because Christ cannot be divided: therefore He dwells entirely within the arm, which in turn then becomes a sacred object – the reason why people thought the arm belonged to a statue of Christ in the first place. An intellectual problem is thus explained through a theological paradox. The metaphor is no longer a trope but becomes the basis of the invention.

In *De Anima*, Aristotle developed the theory that any speech is by nature metaphorical because concepts (*noeta*) are mental images that serve as substitutes for the objects of perception (*aistheta*).<sup>24</sup> This precept lies at the foundation of the seventeenth-century practice and theory of wit, together with other works by Aristotle and by Latin rhetoricians including Quintilian,<sup>25</sup> Cicero,<sup>26</sup>

22 Matos, *Poemas Atribuídos*, 131.

23 Michael R.G. Spiller, *The Development of the Sonnet: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 1992).

24 D.W. Hamlyn, *Aristotle's De Anima*, 3 vols., vol. 3 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), *passim*.

25 Quintiliano, *Institutio Oratoria*, trans. Bruno Fregni Basseto (Campinas: Editora Unicamp, 2015), V. 2, p. 457.

26 Cicero, *Partitiones Oratoriae* (South Carolina: CreateSpace, 2014), 18,22 and *De Oratore in Rhetorica*, ed. Augustus Samuel Wilkins, 3 vols. vol. III., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963).

the anonymous author of the pseudo-Ciceronian *Rhetorica ad Herennium*,<sup>27</sup> and Longinus's above-mentioned *On the Sublime*. All these authors contributed elements of what would become the theory of wit and were, as such, used in the seventeenth century to justify, explain, and dictate this method of composing. In this way, the poetry and prose of the seventeenth century can be seen as constituting the reception of philosophical and rhetorical precepts from ancient authors as opposed to representing an attempt at emulating ancient poets directly, as was done by authors in the eighteenth century. When explaining the definition of a metaphor, Aristotle, in *Poetics* XXI, writes:

Metaphor consists in transferring to one thing the name of another, either from the genre to the species, or from the species to the genre, or from the species of one genre to the species of another genre, or through analogy.<sup>28</sup>

In a different passage (*Rhetoric* 1410b), Aristotle explains how a metaphor is an expression of courtesy: 'it is now necessary to say [with regard to metaphor] where the courteous (*asteion*) and better-accepted expressions come from'. The philosopher expresses the importance of the observation of how to use the metaphor in 1459a:

it is of great importance the subtle usage of (...); however, it is of greater importance the subtle usage of metaphors (...), and it reveals, thus, the natural ingenuity of the poet; in fact, to be able to discover well the metaphors means to well realize the resemblances.<sup>29</sup>

As we saw, Gregório de Matos and the poets of the seventeenth century in general sought concepts which were distant from one another – the more distant the better. In so doing, de Matos and his fellow poets were not actually seeking to persuade anyone to take action, but rather to delight the reader using the ingenuity of the intellect, compellingly expressed through a well-arranged combination of words that provokes amazement. Furthermore, recognizing the metaphors on which the ingenious poet has alighted proves that the reader/listener was part of that same social sphere, like a courtier, and, as such, an ingenious man or woman him- or herself.<sup>30</sup> When criticized for the obscure

<sup>27</sup> Anonymous, *Rhetorica ad Herennium* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1923), IV, 19.

<sup>28</sup> Aristotle, *Ars Poetica*, ed. R. Kassel (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 1457b.

<sup>29</sup> Aristotle, "III" in *Ars Rhetorica*, ed. W.D. Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 10–1410b.

<sup>30</sup> Hansen, "Autoria, obra e Público", 113.

nature of his writing, formidable Spanish poet Luis de Góngora replied: 'I don't write for many people'.<sup>31</sup>

These metaphors turning on the distant are – despite being associated with an elevated style and, as such, common in poems about religion – present in all genres. Here we can see an example of wit in a poem attributed to Gregório de Matos that deals with the theme of love:<sup>32</sup>

Ó tu do meu amor fiel traslado Mariposa entre as chamas consumida, Pois se à força do ardor perdes a vida, A violência do fogo me há prostrado.	[O you, faithful replica of my love, moth consumed amid the flames, for while you lose your life by dint of heat, the violence of the fire has laid me low.
Tu de amante o teu fim hás encontrado, Essa flama girando apeteçada; Eu girando uma penha endurecida, No fogo que exalou, morro abrasado.	You have met your end as a lover, circling this coveted flame; I, circling a rigid rock, burn to death in the fire it spewed.
Ambos de firmes anelando chamas, Tu a vida deixas, eu a morte imploro Nas constâncias iguais, iguais nas chamas.	Both longing for flames with equal zeal, you lapse from life, I beg for death, alike in our resolve, alike in the flames.
Mas ai! que a diferença entre nós choro, Pois acabando tu ao fogo, que amas, Eu morro, sem chegar à luz, que adoro. <sup>33</sup>	But, alas, it is our difference I bewail, for you end your life in the fire you love, while I die without reaching the light I adore.]

This poem in fact emulates an earlier sonnet, Sonnet CCLVII, by renowned Portuguese poet Luís de Camões. Emulation is a well-known poetic criterion that started in antiquity and made its way around the world.<sup>34</sup> Robert Curtius, for instance, wrote on this matter:

31 João Adolfo Hansen, "Ut Pictura Poesis e Verossimilhança na Doutrina do Conceito do Século XVII Colonial", *Floema: Caderno de Teoria e História Literária*, 2A (October 2017), 212.

32 For a discussion of the lyric genre and its categorization as 'simpler', see Biester, *Lyric Wonder*, 1997. See also Achcar, *Lírica e Lugar-Comum*, 2015.

33 Matos, *Poemas Atribuídos*, vol. 4, 55.

34 See note 34 above.



The “timeless present” which is an essential characteristic of the literature of the past can always be active in that of the present. (...). There is here an inexhaustible wealth of possible interrelations.<sup>35</sup>

In the seventeenth century, emulation concentrates on what works in one poem and how another poet might redeploy it more effectively.<sup>36</sup> In this case, the emulation revolves around the commonplace image of love as fire.<sup>37</sup> In his sonnet Camões compared a butterfly flying towards the flame with the narrator pursuing his love. Death is as inevitable as love is. De Matos uses the moth, a slightly larger insect, to establish a comparison with the narrator.<sup>38</sup> The main difference resides in the reinterpretation of the metaphor. In de Matos's sonnet, not only is love fire but, although the narrator gets burned and dies, he remains unable to reach the flame he circles. In this way, the poem pleases and amazes for at least two reasons: the emulation of Camões, and the approach to the comparison between love and fire through a new form of wit. The death of an insect consumed by flames offered by way of comparison to a narrator in love does not stop there. In fact, it is worth examining another sonnet by the Portuguese poet, Francisco de Vasconcelos, that uses the same metaphor:

Tu Fénix, tu do amor doce traslado,  
Companheiro em meus males peregrino,  
Pois se em fogo te acaba o teu destino,  
Em chamas me atormenta o meu cuidado

[O, Phoenix, you sweet replica of love,  
wandering companion amid my ordeals,  
for your destiny leads you to die in the fire,  
while in flames my fixation torments me.

Tu te podes queixar de um triste fado,  
Eu me queixarei de um deus menino,  
Pois tu por desgraçado, e eu por fino  
Acabas encendido, eu abrasado.

You may complain of a sorry fate,  
I shall make complaint of a boy-god,  
for wretched as you are, delicate as I am,  
you end up aglow, I scorched.

Mas oh, que as tuas ânsias são pequenas  
À vista do martírio, em que discorro,  
Porque renasces em morrendo apenas;

But, oh!, your paltry concerns pale  
beside the martyrdom that assails me,  
for you are no sooner dead than re-born;

35 Ernst Robert Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (New York: Bollingen Foundation Inc., 1953), 15.

36 Hansen, “Retórica da Agudeza”, 325.

37 This *topos* – love as fire – has existed at least since Sappho's famous poem, fr. 31.

38 Emulation in antiquity had already revolved around the size of various animals, as with the comparison of birds in Catullus and Martial: see Richard Hooper, “In Defense of Catullus’ Dirty Sparrow”, *Greece and Rome*, Vol. 32, no. 2 (1985), pp. 162–178.

E servindo-te as penas de socorro.	your feathers serving as salvation.
Tu renasces do fogo em tendo	You are reborn from the fire by those
penas,	feathers,
Eu porque muito peno, em chamas morro. <sup>39</sup>	while I, in my great anguish, die aflame.]

This sonnet bears notable similarities to the previous one. In fact, some of the verses are almost identical. In the seventeenth century, the idea of plagiarism did not exist in the same way as it does today. There was no subjectivity in composition.<sup>40</sup> The processes of *inuentio* and *elocutio* involved in a poem of this type show an *ars*, a technique of likeness and appropriate effect, based on the concept of mimesis from Aristotle and subsequently reinterpreted neo-scholastically. This sonnet, therefore, does not plagiarize but rather emulates the previous one, entering into a debate with it, arguing over which of the two expresses an apt metaphor more neatly and wittily. In reality this poem contains two types of wit, i.e., the concept of wit (connecting “love” and “fire” through a characteristic – in this case the quality of heat – shared in common, for the heat of fire burns as much as the feeling of love) and the wit of wordplay, for in Portuguese the word ‘*pena*’ has two meanings: ‘feather’ and ‘suffering/punishment’. The poet then develops his work in order to combine the two meanings of the word, at the same time comparing an animal to the pursuit of love, as was also the case in the other two sonnets. In this way, the poem has two forms of wit and establishes a contest through emulation with its predecessors.

This system of poetic composition, based on classical philosophy and courtly manners designed to exhibit the virtues of the courtier through the art of wit, was ubiquitous not only in Europe but across America. The prestige which certain poets achieved helped to carry their work far from the European courts and over to the ‘New World’. The most famous of these poets was the above-mentioned Spaniard Luis de Góngora, and from his poetry writers such as *sor* Juana Inés de la Cruz, Manuel Botelho de Oliveira, Diego de Mexía (on whom see Joanne van der Woude in this volume), and our own Gregório de Matos, among others, were able to insert themselves into this tradition of composition from within the New World context. However, as mentioned at the start, the work attributed to de Matos was never published in book form during his lifetime. In Brazil during the colonial years, a vast amount of poetry circulated orally and, even when committed to paper, gave rise to other oral

39 Alcir Pécora, ed., *Poesia Seiscentista – Fênix Renascida & Postilhão de Apolo* (São Paulo: Hedra, 2002), 149.

40 Hansen, “Retórica da Agudeza”, 323.

and written variants, just as was the case with European poetry in the medieval period by means of a process which Paul Zumthor has termed *mouvance*.<sup>41</sup> In this way, the name 'Gregório de Matos' does not indicate an author but rather a system of composition that bestows an *auctoritas* on the text. In this particular case, the name 'Gregório de Matos' entails two literary *auctoritates*, one lyrical and one satirical; it is to the latter that we now, lastly, turn.

Gregório de Matos earned his nickname 'Boca do Inferno' not for his religious or lyrical poems, but on account of his satirical work. It is this genre that made the poetry attributed to him most famous, generating many debates about the identity of the poet and indeed the very definition of the nature of Brazilian literature. Furthermore, it is mostly the satirical strand of his work that deals with specific features, events, and characters from early modern Brazil – specifically, from Bahia. The satiric genre in the seventeenth century is a development of the ancient satirists – Lucian of Samosata (on whom see further Padilla Peralta in this volume), Horace, and Juvenal – whose texts began to circulate again at that time, as well as of the medieval tradition of parody, ultimately identified with the *visiones*.<sup>42</sup> In the case of the satirical poetry attributed to de Matos, we find both anodyne and iambic types of humour. Some of his poems might still amuse us in the twentieth-first century, especially those against the governor of Bahia, Antônio de Sousa de Menezes; but others will shock us for, among other things, the extreme racism, sexism, and anti-Semitism which they exhibit. Satire, in seventeenth-century Counter-Reformation poetry, was not intended to preach new values, but, on the contrary, was the genre to point to whatever escaped the natural order of things as defined by God and reaffirmed in the *pactum subjectionis*.<sup>43</sup> In the words of João Adolfo Hansen:

For instance, in the satirical poetry produced in Bahia in the last two decades of the seventeenth century, the use of commonplaces of the demonstrative genre in its low, negative variant, *vituperation*, and of the two Aristotelian subgenres of the comic, the *ridicule* and the *evil-speaking*, imitates *topoi* of the Latin poetry of Juvenal, composing arguments and human types particularized by the conventionalized references of the subjects of the place, such as crises on the sugar plantation, the corruption of governors, the lack of currency, the misuse and theft of flour, the

41 Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale*, Collection Poétique (Paris: Seuil, 1972), 73.

42 Alberta Gatti, "Satire of the Spanish Golden Age" in *A Companion to Satire: Ancient and Modern*, ed. Ruben Quintero (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 96.

43 João Adolfo Hansen, "A Civilização pela Palavra", in *500 Anos de Educação no Brasil*, ed. 2 (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000), 19–41. In this sense, C17th satire is much closer to Juvenal than to Horace; cf. Anderson, *The Roman Socrates*, 1963.

behavior of the *mulattos*, local cases of simony and concubinage among the clergy, sexual practices *contra naturam*, etc.<sup>44</sup>

An example can be found in the following poem, addressed to the ‘Caramurus’ – a Tupí term for ‘Europeans’ – of Bahia:

Um calção de pindoba a meia porra, Camisa de urucu, mantéu de arara, Em lugar de cotó, arco e taquara, Penacho de guarás em vez de gorra.	[Leafy shorts slung midway down the groin, shirt dyed in <i>urucu</i> , cloak of macaw; bow and bamboo in place of cleaver, and crest of <i>guará</i> feathers in place of cap.
Furado o beíço, e sem temor que morra, O pai, que lho envasou c’uma titara,  Senão a mãe, que a pedra lhe aplicara, A reprimir-lhe o sangue que não corra.	His lip pierced, free from fear of death, by his father, who bored through with a palm shoot, while his mother applied the pumice stone to staunch the blood and stop the flow.
Animal sem razão, bruto sem fé, Sem mais leis que as do gosto, quando erra, De paiaia virou-se em abaité.	This irrational beast, faithless brute – lawless but for his fancy as he strays –  went from <i>paiaia</i> to honorable man.
Não sei, onde acabou, ou em que guerra, Só sei, que deste Adão de massapé  Procedem os fidalgos desta terra. <sup>45</sup>	I don’t know where he met his end, or in which war; all I know is that from this Adam of <i>massapé</i> clay stem the noblemen of this land.]

The most striking element here is the high concentration of Tupí words, which de Matos used almost exclusively in compositions of the satirical genre. In the wider history of textual production in Brazil during the colonial period, European writers’ recourse to words from Tupí and other indigenous languages is not uncommon. For instance, the Jesuit missionary José de Anchieta wrote several poems in Tupí in the sixteenth century. However, Anchieta used the Tupí language in order to get closer to the natives and introduce Christian

44 João Adolfo Hansen, “Para uma história dos conceitos das letras coloniais luso-brasileiras dos séculos XVI, XVII e XVIII”, in *Agudezas Seiscentistas e Outros Ensaio* (São Paulo: Edusp, 2019), 43.

45 Matos, *Poesia Atribuída*, vol. 1, 377.

themes into their language with the ultimate aim of converting them. In the poems attributed to de Matos, we find the use of Tupí exclusively in the satirical portion of the *oeuvre*, never in the lyrical. This is perhaps a new take on the commonplaces of the genre that we find in Roman poet Juvenal and which de Matos closely follows. Satire is composed to criticize vices, meaning that – following Aristotle – its subject is lowest of the low, which must in turn be reflected in the style.<sup>46</sup> In this sense, the use of Tupí has a double function: it is part of the ‘low’ style, being an ‘inferior’ language spoken by ‘inferior’ people; and it also contributes to the construction of the *éthos* of those satirized by the narrator. Our translation into English does not convey the full effect of all the Tupí words (*pindoba*, *urucu*, *arara*, *taquara*, *guará*, *titara*, *paiaia*, *abaeté*, *massapé*) present in the original, though does maintain some. The narrator describes the object of his satire as a semi-naked individual, wearing low-slung shorts made out of palm leaves, shirtless but daubed in paint, decked out in feathers, armed with a bow and arrow, and his lip pierced according to ancestral custom. It is the description of a native Brazilian made, generically, with disdain. The narrator proceeds with the description, but now concentrates on the ethical aspect: the figure is said to lack reason, religion, and laws – a familiar commonplace in descriptions of indigenous people by Europeans. He is then said to have gone from being a *paiaia* to an *abaité*. A *paiaia* is someone who belongs to an indigenous tribe, the *Paiaias*, who inhabited the coast of Bahia, while ‘*abaité*’ is the Tupí word for an honorable man. The use of the Tupí term instead of the Portuguese equivalent deflates the very meaning of the word, however, because – on this view – a Tupí cannot be an honorable man. The last tercet reaffirms, once again, how unimportant this person is since he died without fame or glory in an unknown time and place. All the same, he is the forerunner of all the noblemen of Bahia. Just like original sin for Christians, the ancestor here – this ‘*massapé*’ Adam (‘*massapé*’ is the black soil used in the cultivation of sugarcane) – projects his (again, in this context) ‘defective’ nature as a mixed-race individual into those who are now in charge of Bahia, but, given their ‘impure’ and ‘inferior’ heritage, really should not be.

The satire attacks while laughing. The *evil-speaking* develops a hierarchy of types of people in the name of the common good.<sup>47</sup> It advocates for an already existing order in society, guided by God, that should not be disrespected. Change is the vice that should be highlighted, ridiculed, and condemned. The process for doing so comes from the classical precepts for demonstrative rhetoric. So as to condemn the mixing of races and their position in society,

46 Aristotle, *Ars Rhetorica*, 7–1408ab.

47 Hansen, “A Sátira e o Engenho”, 389.

this poem avails itself of the epideictic commonplaces of origin, physical constitution and nation.<sup>48</sup> It is concerned with origin because, according to Quintilian,<sup>49</sup> children are similar to their parents and ancestors, and, as such, worthy of praise or vituperation accordingly. The physical constitution is made to highlight the ugliness of the '*massapé* Adam' as a mirror of his inner sins and, by extension, those of his descendants. In its reinterpretation of the commonplace of 'nation', seventeenth-century poetry combined it with the religious element. The indigenous individual, therefore, is a heretic, just as Jewish, German, and Dutch people, among others, are represented in this poetry; and they are also irrational, for adherence to the Catholic faith was associated with reason, which in turn was thought to be lacking in those who did not. The style evokes an angry persona who through obscenity and wrath denounces hypocrisy, closely following the main *auctor* of the genre, Juvenal. Thus, using a demonstrative model found in ancient classical texts and adapting it to the reality of the Counter-Reformation and of the New World, the poet is capable of inserting new elements such as the Tupí language and indigenous individuals into an old pattern, finding in them similarities with those commonplaces already canonical in poetry.

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As we have seen, the poems attributed to Gregório de Matos belong to a multinational context, forged amid the discoveries of classical texts and adapted to the mentality of European courts and Counter-Reformation agendas. This use of classical sources by European poets travelled across the pond to flourish in the New World as well. In seventeenth-century Brazil, the reception of classical literature was heavily dependent on its reception in Portugal and Spain. In this way, de Matos's poetry can be compared with that of other Latin American poets, including Juana Inés de la Cruz, Diego Mexía, and Manuel Botelho de Oliveira, all of whom emulate Luis de Góngora, Francisco de Quevedo, and others. At the same time, the case of de Matos is more specific because his name was a mark of a type of composition, not of a person, as a result of which we cannot be sure as to authorship and, more importantly, as to the level of literacy of the authors of the poems attributed to him. Hence, in a highly illiterate society, it is fair to assume that some of the poems in his collection were composed by individuals whose only connection to poetry, court manners, and classical texts was the practice of poetry itself. Thus the multi-layered

48 Hansen, "A Sátira e o Engenho", 393–403.

49 Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 5, 10, 23.

reception of classical texts made by a multitude of people collected under the name 'Gregório de Matos' served not only to praise Heaven but to unleash Hell, bearing witness to the reach of classical texts through time, space, and even literacy.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> I wish to express my gratitude to Connie Bloomfield-Gadêlha, Carla Chaubet, and also to Maya Feile Tomes, for without her patience, kindness, and suggestions this chapter would not have been possible.

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## *La Primera Parte del Parnaso Antártico* [‘The First Part of the Antarctic Parnassus’]: Print and the Politics of Translation in Early Peruvian Poetry

*Joanne van der Woude*

Around the year 1600, a group of poets in colonial Lima formed a literary academy like those that had recently sprung up in Spain: a social circle of authors focusing on poetic translations of Greek, Latin, and Italian texts.<sup>1</sup> Its name, the ‘Academia Antártica’ [Antarctic Academy], immediately drew attention both to colonial imitation – the Spanish academies had been founded mainly in Seville, which was also the administrative headquarters of the Spanish empire – and to marked difference by mentioning the society’s setting in the Southern or ‘Antarctic’ hemisphere, as it was known in the Iberian context at the time. Members of the academy were prolific, successful, and consistently stressed their location, as in Miguel Cabello de Bilbao’s *Miscelánea antártica* (1586), Juan de Miramontes y Zuázola’s epic poem *Armas antárticas* (1608/9), and, of course, the *Parnaso antártico* (1608) volume under discussion here. These repeated references matter because they deliberately and somewhat defensively posit Lima (and, by extension, the entire distant colony of Peru) as a space of learned discourse and literary art, not some savage wasteland.<sup>2</sup> The

- 1 The academy was not the only venue of poetic organization in Lima; it functioned alongside the University of San Marcos (founded in 1551) and the gatherings sponsored by Viceroy Juan de Mendoza y Luna, Marquis of Montesclaros. Scholars have previously debated whether the academy was actually one (or both) of the above, but current consensus is that all three companies existed, sharing some members. See Luis Jaime Cisneros, “Sobre literatura virreinal peruana (Asedio a Dávalos y Figueroa)”, *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, XII (1955), 227; Aurelio Miró Quesada, *El primer virrey-poeta en América (Don Juan de Mendoza y Luna, Marqués de Montesclaros)* (Madrid: Gredos, 1962), and Roberto González Echevarría, “Colonial Lyric”, in *The Cambridge History of Latin American Literature: Discovery to Modernism*, eds. Roberto González Echevarría and Enrique Pupo-Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 201.
- 2 Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, “Ecos andinos: Clarinda y Diego Mexía en la *Primera Parte del Parnaso Antártico* (1608)”, *Calliope: Journal of the Society for Renaissance and Baroque Hispanic Poetry* 9 (2003), 67.

achievements of the colonial poets were praised in Spain as early as 1585 by Cervantes in his *Canto de Calíope*, while Lope de la Vega commended 13 poets from Peru in his *Laurel de Apolo* (1630).<sup>3</sup>

A central figure in the Academia Antártica was Diego Mexía de Fernangil (approximately 1565–1617), a former Sevillian bookseller. His connections in the book trade facilitated the publication of *La Primera Parte del Parnaso Antártico*, which features a translation of Ovid’s *Heroides* by Mexía himself.<sup>4</sup> Roberto Echevarría has summarized Mexía’s importance as follows: “Mexía’s classicism, and his contacts with Lima poets such as Pedro de Oña [a fellow member of the Academia], mark him as a representative figure of colonial literary history. His choice of the difficult Ovid also makes him a transitional figure between renaissance and baroque poetry”.<sup>5</sup> In addition to Mexía’s translation, the *Parnaso* also included an anonymous verse treatise on literary theory (‘El discurso en loor de la poesía’ [Speech in Praise of Poetry]), a biography of Ovid, and an autobiographical epistle by Mexía called ‘El Autor a sus Amigos’ [The Author to his Friends]. In case the title *Parnaso Antártico* did not sufficiently mark the book as American, Mexía’s epistle narrates how, during a voyage from Peru to New Spain in 1596, he disembarked in a hurry and then had to walk more than three hundred leagues (about 800 modern miles) to Mexico City. It is during this “dificultosísimo [y] peligroso” (A, verso) [most difficult and dangerous] walk that Mexía claims to have started the *Heroides* translation that makes up the bulk (pp. 27–240) of the *Parnaso*. This autobiographical story makes multiple points at once, namely that its author – in what is surely an instance of *sprezzatura*, a Renaissance display of artistic effortlessness – is someone capable of easily translating Latin verse while traversing difficult terrain, but also that the institutions (like libraries) and instruments (like dictionaries) of Old World learning are apparently unnecessary to literary translation in America.

Arguing that poetry can exist and even flourish in America is central to the *Parnaso*, and the volume makes that argument in multiple ways. In addition to Mexía’s boast of translating while traveling, the book’s title situates Mount Parnassus – a sacred site in ancient Greece, seen as the location of poetry, literature, and learning – in the Southern hemisphere. Parnassus (topographically

3 Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, “Gendered Voices from Lima and Mexico: Clarinda, Amarilis, and Sor Juana”, in *A Companion to the Literatures of Colonial America*, eds. Susan Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer (Malden, MA/Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), 279.

4 *Primera Parte del Parnaso Antártico de Obras Amatorias* (Seville, 1608), hereafter cited as *Parnaso*. I have used Trinidad Barrera’s *Edición facsimilar e introducción* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1990).

5 “Colonial lyric”, 202.

similar to Andean Peru, perhaps, though not to coastal Lima) was not just an environment where poems were composed: as home of the Muses, it was the primary place of literary inspiration. If Parnassus is now Antarctic, that means the Muses have migrated across the ocean – a trope that would become popular in English and Dutch poetry from the colonial Americas too.<sup>6</sup> By imaginatively transporting Parnassus from ancient Greece across the Atlantic, colonial poets asserted their right to use figures and themes from classical antiquity, but they also, often wishfully, implied that the New World was already like the Old: familiar and tamed. This rhetorical gesture, whereby ideas and meanings are transferred to a new context (America), is known as *translatio studii* and often occurs alongside ideas about the spread of government and empire (from Rome to, say, Seville), known as *translatio imperii*.<sup>7</sup> In the midst of all these cases of *translatio*, it is important to keep in mind that in early modern times textual translation itself was a multifaceted literary practice that included imitation, translation, and even a competitive impulse to improve the original text. *Translatio* was not seen as derivative or inferior to creative composition.<sup>8</sup> The *Parnaso Antártico* employs translations in several different guises: from the *translatio studii* in its title to Mexía's translation of Ovid's *Heroides*. In the *Parnaso*, translation is thus a polyvalent tool that works through titles, images, and texts towards proving the validity of colonial American poetry.<sup>9</sup>

Yet it is another part of the *Parnaso* that has garnered by far the most critical attention: “El discurso en loor de la poesía”. This 35-page poem is purportedly written by “una señora principal d'este Reino, muy versada en lengua Toscana, i Portuguesa” [*sic*] [a leading lady of this realm, well versed in Italian and Portuguese] (9). This author, whom tradition has dubbed ‘Clarinda’, is considered remarkable for writing in a place and age wherein women were not customarily taught to write. Because no other information about or works by

6 For a consideration of both, see Joanne van der Woude, “The Migration of the Muses: Translation and the Origins of American Poetry”, *Early American Literature* 45, No. 3 (2010), 499–532. See also Chang-Rodríguez, “*Aquí, ninfas del sur, venid ligeras*”: voces poéticas virreinales (Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2008).

7 For the ramifications of this in colonial America, see Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, “*Translatio Studii* and the Poetics of the Digital Archive: Early American Literature, Caribbean Assemblages, and Freedom Dreams”, *American Literary History* 29, No 2, (2017), 248.

8 These points about early modern translation have been recently expounded in Jane Tylus, Karen Newman, and Peter Burke, eds., *Early Modern Cultures of Translation* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015), 5–7.

9 Julio Vélez-Sainz makes this point at greater length, arguing that, through translation, “Mexía and Clarinda attempt to establish an ‘Antarctic’ literary system within the Spanish empire. Later texts confirm that they succeeded”, in “De traducciones y *translationes*: la fundación de un sistema literario en la Academia Antártica de Diego Mexía”, *Neophilologus* 94 (2010), 55.

'Clarinda' survive, it has been suggested that she (or 'she') may not have been an actual historical person.<sup>10</sup> The scholarly debate surrounding Clarinda's identity is so lively and interesting because the "Discurso" is an expert work of poetry: it discusses and critiques the theories of eminent Spanish thinkers of the time (el Marqués de Santillana, Juan de la Encina, Alonso López Pinciano). Although some of Clarinda's remarks echo other tracts, the idea that a woman in Peru had access to current literary criticism and formulated her own ideas about theology, philosophy, and literature further underscore the idea that the seat of the arts is now located in the New World. Moreover, she wrote those ideas down in Italianate, interconnected tercets of 11 syllables – the same as Mexía's translation of Ovid. Regardless of its author, Clarinda's "Discurso" has been repeatedly recognized as gendered poetic discourse – poetry that is perceived as female. Clarinda even includes a catalogue of poets and savants, notably including "heroines from biblical history (Jael, Judith, the Virgin Mary), as well as women authors from the pagan-Christian tradition (Sappho, Damophila, Pola Argentaria, Valeria Proba, the Sybils and Elpis)".<sup>11</sup> In the context of the volume, Mexía's translation of the *Heroides* which follows then goes on to give the spotlight to fifteen aggrieved classical heroines who accuse their lovers (including Ulysses and Aeneas) of abandoning or mistreating them. In this sense, the "Discurso" performs heavy prefatory lifting for the twelve female complaints of the *Heroides*.

Unlike previous scholarship, however, the emphasis of my argument lies not so much on the matter of 'Clarinda' or her "Discurso", but rather above all on the specific decisions made during the printing of the *Parnaso* and in Mexía's translation of the *Heroides*. To that end, this article will begin by discussing the appearance and history of the *Parnaso* as a printed object. The physical form of the volume matters because it both frames and comments upon the poetic and autobiographical contents. Tracing the unusual path of this early modern Spanish book through the censorship and printing offices of Valladolid and Seville reveals the plans and purposes of the Mexía family with this volume. Despite the jumble of different documents in the volume, which delineate its remarkable path to publication and precede the actual verse, the verse still speaks in a unified tone and form. That tone and form can be better understood once the *Parnaso*'s rarified appearance has been explained. The finery of its printing, engraving, and binding works to encode,

10 For an overview and discussion of the possible identities of Clarinda, see Antonio Cornejo Polar's edition of the "Discurso" with a new introduction by José Antonio Mazzotti (Lima: Centro de Estudios Literarios: 2000), 27–47.

11 "Gendered Voices", 281.

obscure, or even – in a sense – translate its uncomfortable message of colonial complaint. That message is further articulated by the Ovidian women who have been maltreated by imperial heroes in the *Heroides*. The second part of the article consequently goes on to examine Mexía's choices for and within the *Heroides*. It also positions Mexía's translation among French and English *Heroides* translations which had decidedly political implications of their own. Even though translations of antique sources were ubiquitous in early modern Europe, including early modern Spain, the *Parnaso* stands out for the classical parallels it draws, not only by presenting Mexía's life as similar to Ovid's, but also in having Clarinda's masterful verse preface as well as contextualize the twelve complaining heroines.<sup>12</sup> In this way, the contents of the volume are also packaged, as it were, in biography and praise poetry that prepare the reader for the double-voicedness of Dido and her sisters, abandoned by their imperial heroes, to whom we turn at the end.

Before proceeding, I should state that the gestures of colonial complaint that I see in the *Parnaso* are not harbingers of revolution or independence. Rather, they arise from a deep-seated ambivalence towards and sense of competition with Spain felt by many in early modern Peru. Even though the extraction of silver from the mines of Potosí (in modern-day Bolivia) after 1570 made many Lima families fabulously wealthy, they were excluded from any higher-level governmental decision-making. Not all members of the Academia were creole (people of Spanish heritage born in the Americas), yet many (likely) sympathized with the local elite. Mexía, who had come to Peru from Seville, may have done the same and – in alignment with those sympathies – evidently longed to establish America, and especially the academy in Lima, as a literary powerhouse.<sup>13</sup> The *Parnaso* not only shows the high degree of education and sophistication that had already taken hold in Peru: it implies that the colonial elite outperforms its European competition. For these reasons, the *Parnaso* blends the politics of book production, gender, and *translatio* in inventive ways to turn classical translation into an act of colonial competition and complaint.

12 On classical literature, see Teodoro Hampe Martínez, ed., *La tradición clásica en el Perú virreinal* (Lima: Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marco, 1999).

13 See also, for instance, Lisa Voigt's reading of Mexía's *El Dios Pan*, an eclogue describing a Corpus Christi celebration in Potosí: "by the end of the eclogue ... the 'astonished' reader might be led to believe that Mexía de Fernangil has surpassed his classical forebears, as much as Potosí itself has exceeded Lima, and even Rome, in its spectacular adornment": "Spectacular Wealth: Baroque Festivals and Creole Consciousness in Colonial Mining Towns of Brazil and Peru", in *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas: Empires, Texts, Identities*, eds. Ralph Bauer and José Antonio Mazzotti (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 273.

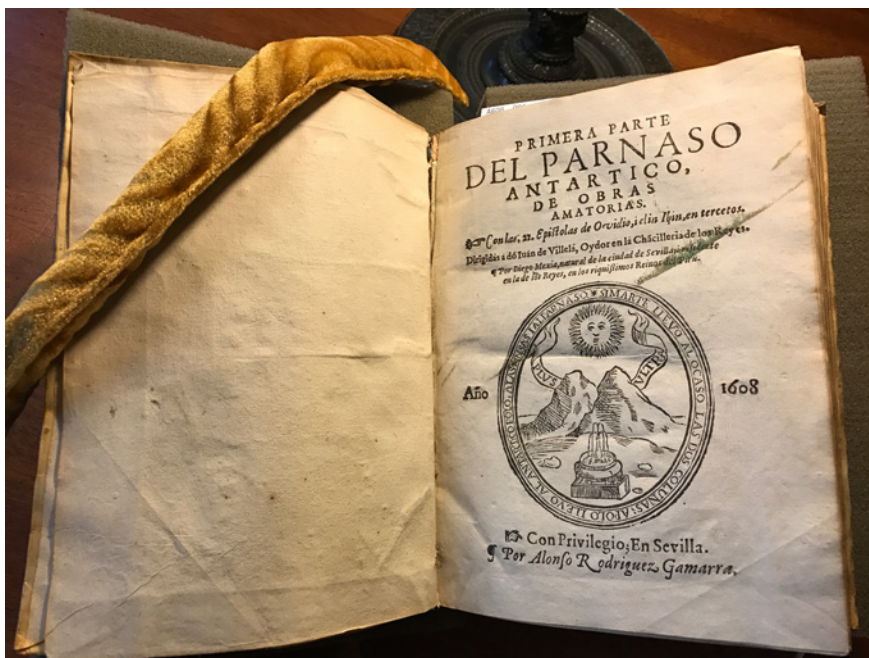


FIGURE 4.1 *Primera Parte del Parnaso Antártico de Obras Amatorias*. 1608. Frontispiece  
COURTESY OF THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

## 1 Judging a Book by Its Front Matter

When encountering the *Parnaso*, one first finds (regardless of binding or digitization) the engraved frontispiece (fig. 4.1), which states the volume's title and draws the reader's attention – by means of manicules and pilcrows – to its contents (Ovid), authorship (Mexía, notably born in Seville, but residing in Peru), printer's location (Seville), licence, and name.<sup>14</sup> The image in the centre may look simple, but it contains an impressive number of allusions and implications. From the mountain Parnassus two ribbons protrude bearing the motto of Castile ('plus ultra' [further beyond]).<sup>15</sup> The sun above it can be seen as "a symbol of the Inca empire and of Peru in the iconography of the

14 The printer was well-known for shipping books to America, which makes it likely that some copies of the *Parnaso* would have made their way (back) to Lima. See Pedro Rueda Ramírez, "Alonso Rodríguez Gamarra en el comercio de libros con la América colonial (1607–1613)", *Revista General de Información y Documentación* 18 (2008), 129–145.

15 Cf. Earl Rosenthal, "Plus Ultra, Non plus Ultra, and the Columnar Device of Emperor Charles V", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 34 (1971), 204–228.

period",<sup>16</sup> while the fountain is the transformed nymph Castalia, whom Apollo changed into a spring at Delphi (at the base of Mount Parnassus); she poetically inspires those who drink from, or hearken to, her waters. The oval frame reads: "Si Marte llevó al ocaso las dos columnas / Apolo llevó al Antártico Polo a las musas y al Parnaso". [If Mars bore the two columns [marking the end of the known world] off to the West, Apollo carried off the Muses to Parnassus and to the Antarctic].<sup>17</sup> The god of war, Mars, is thus held responsible for subjugating new Western territories, i.e., America, while Apollo has inspired these new territories by bringing the Muses and the mountain to the new continent. With remarkable succinctness, the motto thus connects the military or governmental *translatio imperii* with the artistic *translatio studii*.<sup>18</sup> Clarinda returns to the idea of the migration of the muses in her "Discurso" when she invokes the "Ninfas d'el Sur" [nymphs of the South] (9, l. 22). In a later riff, she writes:

Que como dio el Dios Marte con sus manos  
al Español su espada, porque el solo  
fuesse espanto, i orror de los Paganos:

Assi tambien el soberano Apolo  
le dio su pluma, para que bolara  
d'el exe antiguo a nuestro nuevo Polo. (19, ll. 1–6)

[Just as the God Mars gave with his hands  
his sword to the Spaniard, so that the latter alone  
might become the dread and horror of the pagans:

So too did sovereign Apollo  
give him [the Spaniard] his pen, so that he might fly  
from the ancient axis to our new Pole.]

Mars's sword is a direct analogue (and necessary precursor) to Apollo's pen here: both serve to subdue and civilize America. It is worth pointing out that

16 Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, "Clarinda's Catalogue of Worthy Women in her *Discurso en Loor de Poesía*", *Calíope: Journal of the Society for Renaissance and Baroque Hispanic Poetry* 4.1–2 (1998), 101.

17 I have preserved the original spelling and orthography but unfurled some abbreviations for legibility.

18 This common connection has been more thoroughly explored in Eric Cheyfitz, *The Poetics of Imperialism: Translation and Colonization from The Tempest to Tarzan* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997; expanded edition).



the authors of the Lima academy repeatedly celebrated Spanish imperialism in this fashion.<sup>19</sup> Their complaint is not with European culture or domination: they seek to outperform the Europeans at classical translations and adaptations, thereby proving the creoles' fitness to govern.

This deference to Spain explains why Mexía lists his birthplace on the titlepage, and why, in the three-page "Dedicatoria" to Iván de Villela, Judge of the Audiencia [appellate court] of Peru, he confesses, "mi temeridad en embiarlas a España a imprimir: mas es justo que se entienda que habiendo ella [España] con tanta gloria passado sus columnas, con las armas, de los límites que les puso Alcides, también con ellas pasó las ciencias i buenas artes, en las cuales florecen con eminencia en estos Reinos muchos ecelentes sugetos" [my daring in sending them [the *Heroides*] to Spain to be printed: but it is only right for people to realize that, now that Spain has, by the might of its arms, so gloriously moved its columns from the limits which Hercules set for it, so too has it with equal glory spread its sciences and fine arts, at which so many excellent individuals in these realms excel [i.e., in Peru, or indeed the Americas]] (unnumb., \*3). Already by the third page of the volume, the reader will begin to tire of this extended and relentlessly emphasized figure. The analogy between the weapons ("armas") that gloriously ("con tanta gloria") moved Europe's borders beyond the ancient world ("sus columnas, ... de los límites que les puso Alcides") and the arts and sciences which now also flourish ("florecen con eminencia") among the Spanish Crown's American subjects sounds stale. The *Parnaso* thus speaks loudly and repeatedly of its purpose: there are "muchos ecelentes sugetos" in Peru – apparently female as well as male – whose voices, though bashful, will make themselves heard in Seville.

Those voices speak not only through words, but also through leather, paper, thread, glue, and ink – the vessels that transport their words over to the seat of empire. Related to them is Mexía's aforementioned apology for his "temeridad en embiarlas a España a imprimir" ["folly in sending [the *Heroides*] to be printed in Spain"]. This is a silly apology (albeit in keeping with Renaissance humility *topoi*), which he immediately rescinds because the texts, after all, deserve to be printed; silly *and* significant, because it is precisely Mexía's clout

19 The most famous instance of this is creole poet Pedro de Oña's *Aruaco Domado* (1596), an epic on the Spanish conquest of Chile that (paradoxically) seeks to revise the interpretation put forward by Alonso de Ercilla in his well-known earlier Spanish epic, *La Araucana* (1569–1589). *La Araucana* – considered a high point of early modern Spanish verse – has a distinctly ambivalent stance on the Spanish forces' heroism (or lack thereof) during the conflict in Chile. De Oña, who was born in Chile, sets out to vindicate the Spanish.



FIGURE 4.2 *Primera Parte del Parnaso Antártico de Obras Amatorias*.  
1608

COURTESY OF THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY AT  
BROWN UNIVERSITY

in the book trade in Seville which allowed him to make the *Parnaso* into a physical object so beautiful and luxurious that it already strongly showed forth the value of Peruvian poetry in its outward form.<sup>20</sup> The octavo volume now held by the John Carter Brown Library (fig. 4.2) would immediately have drawn attention for its gold-stamped white vellum binding and gilt-edged pages.

20 The following remarks are based primarily on the copy held in the John Carter Brown Library, yet they apply to the *Parnaso* in general because there appears to be little variation between copies. Sixteen copies remain, according to WorldCat, 4 of which have been digitized; another 8 are described in sufficient detail in their catalogue entries to bear out these conclusions. The 1608 printing is the only one known to exist.

Although early modern poetry was often printed on pages this size, rarely did those pages contain so few words as in this book.

Paper being more expensive than ink and the labor of typesetting, Renaissance pages were often packed with print; margins were either non-existent or filled with (printed) annotations. Not so in the *Parnaso*, which luxuriously features prefatory sonnets on separate pages in very large, clear type and obviously expensive ink – neither runny nor sticky as cheaper variants would have been. No known copies show hand-written annotations, torn pages, or (the brown deterioration of paper known as) foxing. Instead, they are all pristine. This means that the paper was of high quality and that the poems were probably not read during meals, travel, or outside. At the same time, very few copies of the *Parnaso* survive,<sup>21</sup> which in some similar cases is attributed to such intense use that books were literally read to pieces.<sup>22</sup> But it

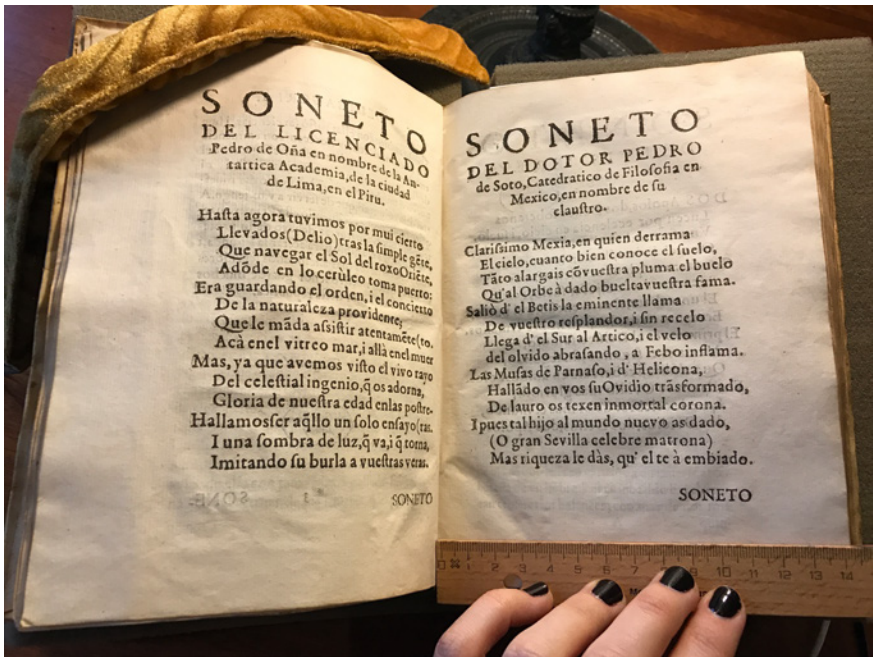


FIGURE 4.3 *Primera Parte del Parnaso Antártico de Obras Amatorias*. 1608

COURTESY OF THE JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

- 21 The sixteen separate 1608 editions listed in WorldCat (see previous note) contain no obvious duplicates, though other copies may exist outside the purview of the database.
- 22 Adam Smyth, *Material Texts in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 56–7. At the same time, the fact that the books are in such pristine condition could also be taken to suggest the opposite: that they were not much read at all.

seems unlikely that that fate befell the *Parnaso*, given the purchase price of a vellum-bound, gilt-edged, substantial volume. This all begs an important question: if – as Mexía did – one wished to convey the cultural sophistication of Lima to the reader in Seville, why would one do so by making a book that was so hard to afford? To understand Mexía's intentions, it will be useful to offer a brief overview of the steps involved in Golden-Age Spanish publishing.

Not all remaining copies of the *Parnaso* feature physical evidence of all these steps,<sup>23</sup> but the one photographed and digitized by the Biblioteca de Andalucía (in Granada) does.<sup>24</sup> The evidence consists of multiple printed pages before the main text – the so-called 'front matter' – which, as Rachel L. Burk explains, "denoted the authorizing legal and commercial apparatuses of printer, bookseller, and censor, situating the printed work ... within the structures that authorized its commercial production and distribution".<sup>25</sup> These structures were complex, and the *Parnaso* navigated them in an unconventional manner that sheds light on the plans of the Mexía family (or perhaps simply Diego Mexía himself) with the volume. First, for a manuscript to be printed in Spain, it would have to be submitted to the Inquisition to get an "Aprobación" (endorsement of approval). In this case, the Mexías (probably Diego's brother) went to the university town of Valladolid where the secretary noted that permission could be granted because he finds no cause ("cosa") for offense and "por ser la traducion en language, verso, i estilo mui curioso, i erudito" [because the translation employs language, metre, and style which is very notable and erudite] (unnumb.). This little, impromptu advertisement was proudly printed and bound with the book: we can only speculate about whether the censor actually liked the poetry or wished to remain on good footing with a powerful bookseller's family.

23 The copy in the John Carter Brown Library discussed and pictured above, for instance, and the copy digitized by the Biblioteca Nacional de España (<http://bdh.bne.es/bne-search/detalle/bdh0000086296>, last accessed 20 March 2020) are missing their "tasas", for reasons discussed below.

24 <http://www.bibliotecavirtualdeandalucia.es/catalogo/consulta/registro.cmd?id=6708> (last accessed 20 March 2020). The following discussion is based on this copy. Another online copy with "tasa" (but missing its "Aprobación") is the copy of the Madrid University Library on GoogleBooks: <https://books.google.nl/books?id=3tOzcHeGPCoC&pg=PP3#v=onepage&q&f=false> (last accessed 20 March 2020). For clarity's sake, the different stages of publishing are discussed in the order in which they happened, and then linked to the paper evidence of their occurrence, which is (confusingly) in a different order from the events.

25 Rachel L. Burk, "Metamateriality and Blood Purity in Cervantes's Alcaná de Toledo", in *The Cultural Politics of Blood, 1500–1900*, eds. Kimberly Anne Coles, Ralph Bauer, Zita Nunes, Carla L. Peterson (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 37–38.

Following the granting of the "Aprobación", the text would be typeset and printed, after which a copy would be submitted to the authorities who would check its fidelity to the Inquisition-approved (stamped and signed) manuscript. The endorsement of the print is registered on another (printed) page, bound right behind the title page in the Granadian copy.<sup>26</sup> Then the book was weighed and its price assigned by the Royal Council, while the printer was granted the privilege ("Privilegio") of publishing the specific work for a fixed term – a kind of copyright *avant la lettre*. The assigned price was listed in the book on a page called the "tasa" (tax or valuation), separate from the required "Privilegio" page. The front matter thus becomes quite lengthy. This apparatus ensured (at least) two things: first, that all books were read more than once – prior to publication, in fact – and likely even already circulated within a churchly (inquisitorial) and governmental (royal council) public sphere of sorts; secondly, that all printed books were neither overtly critical of the Catholic Church nor of the Habsburg empire – a fact which stifled or muted conspicuous complaints coming from the colonies. Even translations of classical texts would be checked word for word.

So how did the *Parnaso* fare amidst all these strictures and censors? It was obviously printed, though, as its few surviving copies suggest, perhaps not in large numbers. It was a lavish production: because of all the (quite) empty pages which added weight, the affixed price ("tasa", which was simply based on weight) was already high: 68.5 maravadíes or 2.5 reales.<sup>27</sup> A fancy binding, as in the brown or white vellum of the surviving copies, would make the book even more expensive. Booksellers could choose whether to print and bind all the documentation – "Aprobación", "Fe de erratas" (endorsement of the print),<sup>28</sup> "Privilegio", and "tasa" – or not, but generally they stuck to a certain (sub)set for a single print run.<sup>29</sup> In the case of the *Parnaso*, the presence and

26 "Vi este libro, intitulado, Primera parte del Parnaso Antartico, i en el no ai cosa dina de notar, que no corresponda co[n] su original. Dada en Madrid a dos de Iunio de 1608" [I have inspected this book, entitled First Part of the Antarctic Parnassus, and in it there is nothing worthy of note which does not correspond to its original. Granted in Madrid on 2 June 1608]. This could also mean that the errata or typesetting mistakes are not noteworthy.

27 In this sense, adding pages or empty(?) pages always raised the price of a book, which may have worked to the advantage of the printer or bookseller (which were usually the same). In reality, printers carefully thought through the likely price of book before they printed it and adjusted the paper volume in accordance with the buyers they had in mind.

28 In other books, the document "fe de erratas" is used for the list of corrigenda.

29 Burk, for instance, closely examines a first edition of *Don Quixote* that is missing its Aprobación, even though it had been granted: "Metamateriality and Blood Purity in Cervantes's Alcaná de Toledo", 38–9.

(dis)order of the ancillary material is exceptional: few existing copies include all the documents and those that do include them in different orders, which suggests there was not one single assembly line where *Parnasos* were bound but rather that they were produced on some sort of case-by-case basis. In some instances, such as when an “Aprobación” lands all the way behind the Table of Contents, “Dedicatoria”, and even the sonnets (as in the copy in the Biblioteca Universitaria de Madrid), it seems likely that the binder (working on a single copy) nearly forgot it and stitched it in belatedly. Some books have no sonnets at all, but two “tasas” and two endorsements (as in the Biblioteca de Andalucía, Granada, copy), which seems like a binder was simply not paying attention or very forgetful. When a “tasa” is completely omitted, as in the fancy copy of the John Carter Brown Library, this may suggest the volume was not intended for the Spanish market at all. Unlike the brown vellum that was customary for expensive Spanish bindings of this time, this version in gold-stamped white vellum seems designed to impress Dutch trading partners of the Mexía firm.<sup>30</sup> Such a gift would not be a mere kindness but rather was designed to awe and intimidate competitors by showing off one’s skill in engraving, printing, and binding – including in white, as was favored by the Dutch market. The *Parnaso* might have special import in this context. Unlike, say, a Spanish epic, Peruvian poetry in white vellum might be more of a tropical rarity, revealing the global reach of its giver.

Further evidence that the Mexías were not looking to make money with (all copies of) the *Parnaso* stems from the dates on its ancillary documents. Whereas most texts wound their way through the systems within a few months at most, the *Parnaso* has an “Aprobación” from November 1604, a “[Suma del] Privilegio” from December 1605, an endorsement (of the correctness of the print) from 2 June 1608, and a tasa of 17 June 1608. The delay here does not lie with the authorities but rather with the printer, who takes nearly four years to present a typeset copy for endorsement. To put this in perspective, it helps to remember that the Mexías were running a brisk business: in 1585, when Diego himself was still in Spain, he bought more than 700 copies of five different books printed in the town of Antequera to sell in Seville.<sup>31</sup> He was no less busy as a bookseller in America, judging by the minimum of 8500 books

30 I am grateful to Ken Ward, former Maury A. Bromsen Curator of Latin American Books at the John Carter Brown Library, for this suggestion. The British Library Database of Bookbindings shows the preponderance of white vellum bindings in C16th and C17th Netherlands. <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/Default.aspx> (last Accessed 20 March 2020).

31 Natalia Maillard Álvarez and Rafael M. Pérez García, “Printing Presses in Antequera in the Sixteenth Century”, in *Print Culture and Peripheries in Early Modern Europe: A Contribution*

sent by his brother Fernando (also known as Hernando) and himself between Seville and New Spain from 1594 to 1600.<sup>32</sup> This same brother was licensed to print the *Parnaso* (according to the “tasa”) and may, like the savvy merchant he was, have waited until he had actual use for the beautiful business favor before seeing it into print. Diego, as a printer himself, probably cared what the book looked like and may have sent a manuscript over the ocean that included precise instructions for the printing, perhaps even right down to prescribing the engraved frontispiece, capitals for titles, and manicules and pilcrowes. Even if Mexía did not supply the *Primera Parte del Parnaso Antártico* to his brother like this, his never-published manuscript of the second part of the *Parnaso Antartico*, recently digitized by the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, is a breathtakingly minute description of what that sequel should look like, down to multiple drawn illustrations (including an exact copy of the frontispiece analyzed above), table of contents, and different kinds of type.<sup>33</sup> It reads like a handwritten copy of a printed book and proves that Diego knew exactly what the *Primera Parte* looked like, either because he had seen a printed specimen, or because he had drawn that one himself too.

Paying attention to the *Parnaso*'s printed form therefore allows us to see how the book navigated structures of publication put in place by the Catholic Church and the Habsburgs, but also how it serves as the emphatically Atlantic calling card of the ambitious Mexías. Moreover, it encourages us to think of the processes of printing and binding as akin to pouring contents into an elaborate vessel to make a specific point to a target audience. In a sense, because of the manipulation of the relationship between contents and form, this transposition resembles translation. When colonial contents appear in such Sevillian finery as the *Parnaso*, it almost seems like *translatio studii* in reverse with the decked-out Peruvian poetry schooling the Spanish readers. Would such a lavish print production have been possible in Lima? Perhaps, seeing as a 1608 Quechua vocabulary also features an engraved title page, ornamental capitals, and high-quality ink.<sup>34</sup> But printing a book in Peru to serve a purpose in Seville would have been circuitous to say the least. The *Parnaso*'s Sevillian imprint

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to the History of Printing and the Book Trade in Small European and Spanish Cities, ed. Benito Rial Costas (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 290.

32 Pedro J. Rueda Ramírez, “Los libreros Mexía en el comercio de libros con América en los últimos años del reinado de Felipe II”, in *Felipe II (1527–1598): Europa y la Monarquía Católica*, ed. José Martínez Millán (Madrid: Editorial Parteluz, 1998), 481.

33 <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100322683/f2.image> (last accessed 20 March 2020).

34 See Diego González Holguín, *Vocabulario dela lengua general de todo el Peru llamada lengua Qquichua, o del Inca* (Lima, 1608) <https://archive.org/details/vocabulariodelal01gonz> (last accessed 20 March 2020).

ultimately functions as a golden cage that houses a rare bird: stunning in appearance, but wait – it also sings!

## 2 Compliments in Exile

Mexía's Ovidian translations make up ninety percent of the *Parnaso's* bulk of 'singing'. Because Clarinda's "Discurso" is in the same metre and rhyme scheme as the *Heroides* translations, the entire volume features interconnected Italianate tercets supposedly spoken by women. Mexía's *Heroides* in particular have always been recognized as qualitatively excellent – perhaps even one of the best Spanish translations ever made.<sup>35</sup> Despite "[ ]el carácter libre que tenían las traducciones durante el Renacimiento" [the free nature of translations during the Renaissance], as Bernat Castany Prado puts it, Mexía strove for fidelity in form and content: "he claims to have chosen the tercet because, he felt, it 'corresponded' somehow to Latin elegiac verse".<sup>36</sup> The "Discurso" and *Heroides* are similarly unified: their form and substance serve to support each other, with the "Discurso" being a learned, contemporary preface to the 'rustic', 'archaic' voices in *Heroides*.

Mexía's choice of Ovid is significant within the European literary context at the time. Mexía himself gives two reasons in a single passage: "pues muchas veze[s] me acon[t]eje lo que a Ovidio estando desterrado entre los rusticos del Ponto ... cuando dize que queriendo hablar Romano, habla Sarmatico" [for the same thing often happens to me as happened to Ovid during his exile among the rustics of the Black Sea – namely that when he wanted to speak in Latin, Sarmatian words would come out instead] (unnumb. A4). Here, Mexía explicitly compares himself to Ovid, who (claims to have) had few interlocutors during his exile at the margins of the Roman empire at Tomis (now Constanța, Romania). The implied loneliness of Mexía's exiled state sits uneasily with the collegiality and fellowship conjured by the (idea of the) Academia Antártica. Perhaps, therefore, he is rather referring to his travels across Mexico (he writes above of his stays "entre barbaros" [among savages] (unnumb. A4)). We cannot know. But he dwells on this theme, claiming: "La comunicacion con ombres dotos ... es tan poca, demas que en estas partes se platica poco desta materia,

35 Antonio Pérez y Gómez, "Noticia bibliográfica", in Fray Cristóbal Mansilla, *Invectiva contra el heresiarca Luther* (Valencia: Cieza: 1985), vii.

36 Bernat Castany Prado, "Las *Heroidas* de Ovidio, en la traducción de Diego Mexía de Fernangil (1608)" (Alicante: Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, 2012), 1. The original quote from Mexía reads: "por parecerme que corresponden estas rimas con el verso elegiaco latino", unnumd. A2 verso.



digo de verdadera Poesia i artificioso metrificar” [contact with other learned men is so minimal, not to mention the fact that in these parts there is little discussion of this subject, which is to say true poetry and sophisticated metre] (unnumb. A4). His loneliness persists due to a lack of conversation and is made worse by the absence of poetry. Compared to Seville, there would be few(er) books available in the Americas in Mexía’s time – though he worked very hard as a trader to remedy that situation.<sup>37</sup> At the same, time it is important to realize that the language of exile and dislocation, even the explicit parallel drawn with Ovid, was so common among colonial Latin American poets as to be almost formulaic.<sup>38</sup> This does not mean, however, that it was meaningless. As with his use of Parnassus and the migration of the Muses, Mexía suggests that the figures of classical antiquity (whether tropes or authors) are replicated in the Americas. The idea of solitary isolation paradoxically invokes a crowded cultural field of Muses, deities, and other Ovids among whom Mexía’s New World poetry fits.

In this passage Mexía styles himself as a man of letters in a wasteland filled with merchants (“los sabios que desto podrian tratar, solo tratan de interes, i gana[n]cia” [the learned who could converse about it [i.e., poetry] only converse about interest and profit] (unnumb. A4 recto, verso)) – though the Archivo General de Indias in Seville lists Mexía’s own reason for sailing to the New World as “se despachó a la provincia de Tierra Firme por mercader” [he sailed for the Spanish holdings in mainland America to trade].<sup>39</sup> Leaving aside however isolated Mexía may have really felt in Lima, what matters is that he carefully crafts an authorial identity for himself in this paragraph that has its ultimate origins in Ovid:

37 On the (kinds of) books present in colonial Peru, see Teodoro Hampe Martínez, “Private libraries in the colonial world: the diffusion of books and ideas in the viceroyalty of Peru”, *Intellectual News* 2, No. 1 (1997), 6–11.

38 I owe this point to Maya Feile Tones, to whom I am also grateful for help with the translations here. See, for instance, Yasmin Haskell, “Suppressed emotions: the heroic *Tristia* of Portuguese (ex-)Jesuit, Emanuel de Azevedo”, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 3, No. 1 (2016), 42–60; Andrew Laird (2011), “Migration und Ovids Exildichtung in der lateinischen Kultur Kolonialmexikos: Rafael Landívar, Cristóbal Cabrera und Vincenzo Lanuchi”, trans. Veronika Coroleu Oberparleiter, in *Exil und Literatur: Interdisziplinäre Konferenz anlässlich der 2000. Wiederkehr der Verbannung Ovids*, eds. Veronika Coroleu Oberparleiter and Gerhard Petersmann (Horn/Vienna: F. Berger & Söhne, 2011); Laird, “Franciscan humanism in post-conquest Mexico: Fray Cristóbal Cabrera’s epigrams on classical and Renaissance authors (Vat. Lat. 1165)”, *Studi Umanistici Picensi* 33 (2013), 195–215.

39 Archivo General de Indias, Contratación, 5538, I, 367 v.

q[ue] el que mas do[c]to viene se buelve mas Perulero: como Ovidio a este proposito lo afirma de los q[ue] iva[n] a los Getas ... escriviendo a Severo

[he who arrives [from Spain] the most learned becomes the most Peruvian of all, just as Ovid in his poem to Severus [i.e., *Ep. Ex Pon.* 4.2 'To Severus'] says of those who go to the Getae [tribes in the region of Ovid's exile]]

unnumb. A4 verso

This last statement implies that bare surroundings (Tomis or Lima) bring forth elaborate poetry and that if you arrive in such surroundings with artistic (rather than mercantile) sensibilities, you will wind up more Peruvian than others – a veiled explanation of why a Sevillian bookseller is trying to prove the worthiness of Peruvian poetry and (perhaps) why he is also subtly voicing a colonial critique of Spain.

Mexía's *Heroides* thus perform *translatio* in at least three ways. Firstly, their artful translation fits within the classical frame (of *translatio imperii* and *studii*) created by the *Parnaso*'s title and frontispiece and Clarinda's "Discurso". Secondly, their translation makes Peru similar to Tomis: a place of loneliness yet fruitful literary composition. Finally, the women featured in the *Heroides* complain about their lovers and husbands having abandoned them, often by traveling over the sea, or else taking advantage of their hospitality while abroad only then to return home again. These recurrent themes of sea travel, betrayal, and/or desertion fit the grievances of the creole elite particularly well. Ovid's lyric protestations gain new meaning and traction once they are read as colonial complaints.

### 3      **Protesting Empire: European Poetic Traditions and Mexía's Colonial Practice**

In order to explore how Mexía's *Heroides* – and indeed the *Parnaso* as a whole – might function as a colonial complaint, I will briefly survey how contemporary authors also used the *Heroides* for their own political purposes, before then, lastly, turning to look closely at some remarkable textual choices Mexía made while translating the first Heroid (Penelope to Ulysses) into Spanish.

If Mexía is using his translation of the 'female' complaints that make up the *Heroides* to critique empire, he would not be the first to do so. In sixteenth-century France, for instance, the *Heroides* was Ovid's most popular work. Easily

surpassing the *Metamorphoses*, it was printed on its own in forty-two editions between 1499 and 1580.<sup>40</sup> Humanist poets Clément Marot and Joachim Du Bellay each published notable translations in which they use and change the heroines for purposes of both *translatio studii* and *imperii*.<sup>41</sup> Their works put forward France as the new locus of knowledge and inspiration, supplanting the ancient Mediterranean. Marot focuses on Dido, yet he turns her story into a foil for the Frenchified Maguelonne, who, unlike Dido, accepts abandonment by her lover with resignation instead of fury. Du Bellay also sets out to transform Virgil’s depiction of the enraged Dido who curses Aeneas into a more virtuous, Ovidian version who wishes Aeneas well. Yet, in this more calm and resigned tone, Dido’s accusations of Aeneas actually register all the more forcefully, making the imperial conqueror appear even more deceptive and disloyal than in Ovid.<sup>42</sup>

Contemporary to Mexía, Michael Drayton’s *Englands Heroicall Epistles* (seven editions between 1597 and 1619) is also heavily indebted to the *Heroides*. In homage to Queen Elizabeth I, Drayton allows “various female figures [to] outline the symbolic importance of the feminine to the public sphere and to dynastic stability” – the latter point hardly being obvious with an unmarried, childless monarch on the throne.<sup>43</sup> In a direct echo of Ovid’s twelve epistles, Drayton versifies the exploits of real historical figures according to three themes set out in the *Heroides*: “firstly, seduction attempts by royal figures (Henry II, King John, Edward the Black Prince, and Edward IV); secondly, liaisons between queens and noblemen (Isabel and Mortimer, Margaret and Poole, Mary and Brandon), and finally consolatory epistles between faithful lovers (Richard II and Isabel, Humphrey and Elinor, Surrey and Geraldine, Jane Grey and Dudley).”<sup>44</sup> Such direct one-to-one mirroring of classical heroines

40 Cf. Paul White, *Renaissance Postscripts: Responding to Ovid’s Heroides in Sixteenth-Century France: Text and Context* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2009).

41 Marot, *Epistre de Maguelonne* (1532) and Du Bellay, *Le Quatriesme livre de l’Enéide de Vergile – Complainte de Didon à Énée, prinse d’Ovide – Sur la statue de Didon, prins d’Ausone* (Paris, 1552).

42 Du Bellay’s depiction thus adheres more closely to what is known as the ‘historical’ tradition of Dido-reception, from Augustine to Boccaccio, which was also shared by Ronsard and Jodelle. For more on this and on Marot and Du Bellay, see Corinne Noirot, “Transmuting Dido: Marot, Du Bellay and the Displacement of Ovidian and Virgilian Authority in *Translatio*”, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 24, No. 1 (2017), 35–56.

43 Danielle Clark, “Ovid’s ‘Heroides’, Drayton and the articulation of the feminine in the English Renaissance”, *Renaissance Studies* 22, No. 3 (2008), 385–400.

44 Richard Hardin, “Convention and Design in Drayton’s ‘Heroicall Epistles’”, *Publications of the Modern Languages Association* 83 (1968), 35–41.

with recent historical figures introduces not only new ways of writing about the past, but also new ideas of translation and correspondence. Unlike earlier translations which uncritically celebrated the English, Danielle Clark has argued that “Drayton produces heroines who critique and comment on male conduct, particularly sexual conduct”.<sup>45</sup> This last point, whereby seduced, fallen women talk back to their former lovers, demanding redress, is particularly relevant for colonial authors, as sexual conquest was often (imagined to be) at the heart of imperial subjugation, most famously in the case of Dido and Aeneas. The second epistle in the *Heroides*, “Phyllis (daughter of a Thracian King) to Demophon (king of Athens, who stopped in Thrace on his way home from Troy)”, could be a lengthy invitation to think about the relationship between colony and metropole as a marriage: the colony, figured female, is possessed and laid open by her colonizer; she offers up her holdings and realms to him, only to be left scanning the horizon for her husband’s return in a Dido-like distinctly suicidal state of mind.<sup>46</sup>

Particularly in the Anglophone tradition, Dido takes centre stage in re-imaginings of Ovid and imperialism. One final incarnation is especially worth mentioning in this context: in his 1673 *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes*, Richard Ligon writes about an English youth, Inkle, who is taken in and saved from starvation by a Native American girl, Yarico – whom, once rescued by his countrymen, the enterprising lad then sells into slavery. After various reworkings (in some, Yarico commits suicide; in most, Inkle gets her pregnant and therefore a better price at sale), this story became an outstanding success on the British stage in the 1780s. It even inspired its own ‘Heroid’, if you will: “An Epistle from Yarico to Inkle”, of which at least four different poetic versions appeared between 1725 and 1792.<sup>47</sup>

In summary, Ovid’s *Heroides* served as vehicles for both political pride and critique in early modern Europe. As a bookseller, Mexía may have been familiar with multiple versions of the epistles, and he certainly would have been aware of the manifold political purposes of translation. Although the *Heroides* were sometimes invoked in support of national and imperial claims (by Spenser for

45 Clark, “Drayton and the articulation of the feminine”, 385.

46 Sir Walter Raleigh’s famous characterization of Guinea as “a virgin land” also comes to mind. Cf. Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphor as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975) and Nathan Probasco, “Virgin America for Barren England: English Colonial History and Literature, 1575–1635”, *Literature Compass* 9, No. 6 (2012), 406–419.

47 See Susan Wiseman, “‘Perfectly Ovidian’? Dryden’s Epistles, Behn’s ‘Oenone’, Yarico’s Island”, *Renaissance Studies* 22, No. 3 (2008), 417–433, and Frank Felsenstein, ed., *English Trader, Indian Maid: Representing Gender, Race, and Slavery in the New World* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999).

instance), this is not the most obvious application of the text. For however you translate them, the *Heroides* are inalienably about the losers of romance, war, and empire talking back from their far-flung locales to those who have conquered and discarded them. Mexía's choice of them, therefore, signifies an (at least poetic) identification with the periphery (of Lima) over the metropole (Seville). Having these female complaints appear alongside Clarinda's learned "Discurso" creates a veritable chorus of colonial female voices who display both their learning and their discontent – showing that the colonies are simultaneously wronged and not to be trifled with. In addition to this already-revealing choice of source text, Mexía's specific verbal choices while translating modify Ovid's original in significant ways.

For those familiar with Ovid's *Heroides*, Mexía's translation may seem unrecognizably verbose. But his voluble verse is in part caused by the tercet, traditional at his time of writing, which renders a single line of Ovid (6–7 words) into three whole lines of Spanish (of usually 7 words *each*, i.e., a total of around 21 words). This means that Mexía has three times the space to make the same point – and plenty of freedom to add his own adornments and emphases.<sup>48</sup> The *Heroides* open with an exasperated Penelope, writing to Ulysses after his success at Troy:

Tu desdichada esposa, aunque consta[n]te  
 Penelope, qu'espera, i a esperado  
 la buelta de su esposo, i dulce ama[n]te.  
 ...  
 Si d'el antiguo amor algo te resta,  
 no me respondas, ven tu mismo luego,  
 a ti mi Señor quiero por respuesta. (27, ll. 1–3, 7–9)

Your unhappy, yet unwavering, wife  
 Penelope, who awaits, and has awaited,  
 the return of her spouse and sweet lover.  
 ...  
 If anything remains of your old love,  
 do not respond to me: come swiftly in person;  
 I want you, my lord, by way of reply.]

Mexía adds unsurprising characterizations to the famously constant Penelope, who, as also in Ovid, does not want to hear from her husband ("no me

48 Mexía is not always consistent in this ratio of Ovid's words to his own. He seems to get more efficient and succinct as the volume progresses.

respondas"): she simply wants him to come home. Yet Mexía adds an important condition: "if anything remains of your old love, do not respond to me", and an immediate addition: "all I want by way of reply is you". In Ovid, Penelope grovels much less: "nil mihi rescribas attinet: ipse veni!" (*Her.* 1.2).<sup>49</sup> From the outset, Mexía's female speakers approach their absent lovers with more deference than in Ovid, and also more desperation. If we read this passage as aimed at an absentee landlord, as Spain was often perceived, Penelope's pleas – and Mexía's choices – gain an additional layer of meaning: if Spain recalls at all the infatuation it once bore towards its colonies, perhaps it could pay more attention to them now?

Periphrasis almost obscures Penelope's next point: that Ulysses's victories at Troy are simply not worth his absence to her. This is pertinent in the colonial context, because Spanish victories in the Philippines, Portugal, and the Netherlands were funded (in part) by silver from Potosí and one wonders – in part thanks to Penelope's adamant repetitions – whether the creole elite thought these were worthwhile expenditures or whether they would have welcomed more investments closer to home. Ovid's Penelope says: "Troy, to be sure, is fallen, hated of the daughters of Greece, but scarcely were Priam and all of Troy worth the price to me" (*Her.* 1.3–4). Mexía, of course, takes longer:

Ya cayó Troya cierto, ya es oi fuego,  
quien a las damas Griegas era odiosa,  
por q'era impedimento a su sosiego.

Erales tan horrible, i espantosa,  
qu'a penas fue su Rei Priamo dino  
de tal rancor, ni d'ira tan rabiosa.

27, ll. 10–15

[Troy has fully fallen, now consumed by fire;  
it was hateful to Grecian ladies,  
for impeding their peace of mind.

It was so horrific and awful to them  
that its king, Priam, was hardly deserving  
of such resentment and raging wrath.]

49 Ovid, *Heroides; Amores*. Trans. Grant Showerman, rev. G.P. Goold (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London England: Loeb Classical Library of Harvard University Press, 1977), 10. All references to Ovid's Latin and its English translation here are to this edition.

This phrasing attempts to mask the fact that to Penelope the whole ordeal is not worth its price, instead focusing on whether or not it was justified in relation to Priam. Mexía's omission of what Troy means to Ulysses and to Penelope herself is meant to imply Ovid's much more powerful statement that it does not mean much, and certainly not enough.

Because Ovid's Penelope keeps harping on about this theme, Mexía must return to it also. He creates two tercets with the same opening, by means of the poetic device of anaphora, which is not present in the Ovidian original:

Pero que m'aprovecha, que por tierra  
ayan echado al Ilion vuestros braços,  
do[n]de el valor de Marte está, i s'encierra?

29, ll. 22–25

Que m'aprovecha ver los embaraços  
de Troya concluidos, i su gente  
muerta, y sus muros hechos ya pedaços?

Si quedo yo tan sola, tan ausente,  
como durando Troya, i sin marido  
biuda è de vivir eternamente.

30, ll. 1–6

[But what good is it to me for Ilium  
to be razed to the ground by your arms,  
where the might of Mars lurks locked within?

What good is it to me to see the travails  
of Troy brought to a close and its people  
dead and its walls now all in pieces,

if I remain as alone, as forsaken,  
as when Troy still stood, living husbandless  
and widowed for all time?]

The repetition which Mexía devises and inserts – “Que m'aprovecha?” [But what good is it to me?, i.e., What does it benefit me?] – neatly encapsulates the concerns of the colonial elite, who wonder what the Spanish empire has done for them lately. In a severe rebuke to hero-worship and imperialism, the proof of Ulysses's might and the levelling of Troy are both pointless to her. One

last characterization of Penelope is relevant. When she imagines what Ulysses is telling his new lovers, she worries that he says: “Yo tengo en Grecia a mi muger, que lana, / i lino como rustica adereza’: / rustica si seré mas no liviana” [‘My wife is in Greece, where she dresses wool and flax in a rustic manner’: rustic I may be, but I am not to be trifled with]. Ulysses is made to acknowledge that he has a wife, but he dismisses her as a ‘rustic’ – meaning provincial, perhaps colonial, as well as simple – who dresses or spins wool. Mexía then introduces an imaginative comeback from Penelope who takes great pride in her weaving and improves upon the epithet, proudly claiming that she is rustic indeed, but not inconstant or easily disregarded. Mexía here voices potential colonial insecurities about being (culturally) inferior to, or less sophisticated than, Spain – only immediately to assuage them.

These are the very insecurities that animate the entire volume of the *Parnaso*: from its paper, ink, and binding, to the anonymous “Discurso” and Mexía’s (pseudo-)autobiography, and, finally, to the *Heroides*. Mexía’s textual choices thus work to strengthen the claims the *Parnaso* has already made in other ways: his Penelope is unfailingly polite, cultured, and deferential, while nevertheless suggesting – in terms more forceful than Ovid’s – that Ulysses’s victories have not benefited her. In this reading, the *Heroides* become powerful pleas for attention and redress of neglected territories who have been ignored in favor of new-fangled, useless, promiscuous pursuits.

• • •

This chapter has considered how the *Parnaso* could be seen as a text of colonial competition and complaint by looking at its exceptional printing process, how Diego Mexía, in concert with the prefatory sonnets, positions himself as Ovid’s double, and at the potential anti-imperial overtones of the *Heroides*. It argues that all three of these processes constitute a form of *translatio*: linguistically, by means of *translatio studii*, and even in reverse when fancy books of Peruvian poetry strive to civilize Seville itself. But, above all, this chapter wants to wrest translation from its strictly confined context of language and metaphor, and instead think of it as a project of deliberate transmission and transformation even between multiple media. In this sense, the *Parnaso Antártico*, for all its frivolity or seeming frivolity, shows how the flexibility of early modern practices of translation allow a single volume to make many political points – the most forceful ones implied in the materiality of its printed form and in its creative ventriloquizing of the classics.



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## *Justaque cupidine lucri ardentes* [‘Burning with a Just Desire for Gain’]: A Barbadian Poet Celebrates the Peace of Utrecht

*John T. Gilmore*

*Commercium ad Mare Australe* (“The South-Sea Trade”), by John Alleyn, is an early eighteenth-century Latin poem in celebration of the Peace of Utrecht which offers several points of interest to the modern reader. On one level, it is a fairly typical example of a particular kind of formal commemorative verse which was popular in the period and for a long time afterwards among Britain’s educated elite. It demonstrates how such poems depended on the widespread acceptance of a normative ideal of a classical education in which Latin texts by ancient writers shared a bilingual cultural space with both Latin works by modern writers and literature in the vernacular. At the same time, the poem is unusual in that it is written by someone from one of Britain’s Caribbean colonies, and both the author and the content of his poem show how modern Latin verse was part of a literary system which spanned the Atlantic. The poem stresses the significance of colonization and imperial conflict to Britain and appears to assert a strong sense of colonial identity.

### 1 The Peace and Patriotic Poetry

The conclusion of the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 brought to an end a long period of war between the Great Britain of Queen Anne and Louis XIV’s France, and their respective allies, which had seen armed conflict in the Caribbean and North American colonies as well as in much of Europe. While the peace was to a significant extent the result of exhaustion on all sides, it was generally felt that Britain was the main gainer in terms of increased prestige and influence, as well as territorial acquisitions such as Gibraltar, Newfoundland, and the French part of the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. As such, it led to national rejoicing, and the University of Oxford joined in with a celebration on 10 July 1713 which included the recitation of speeches and poems (almost all of them in Latin) by members of the university. At both Oxford and Cambridge from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, ceremonies marking university or national festivity

or grief (sometimes combined, as with the death of one sovereign and the accession of another) were generally followed by the publication of handsomely produced commemorative volumes which showcased the universities' literary talents by printing the poems and speeches which had been composed for the occasion. Outside of the universities, poems on similar topics often appeared in English rather than Latin, and both the Latin and English examples were frequently categorized as "state poems". They were not to everybody's taste: the tendency for panegyric to become excessive easily lent itself to mockery, and the collections published in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century under titles like *Poems on Affairs of State* were satirical in nature, and, as such, ridiculed the genre as a whole as well as their own particular targets.<sup>1</sup> When in early 1748 Horace Walpole sent his friend Thomas Gray the *Collection of Poems, By Several Hands*, which had just been published by Robert Dodsley, Gray complained that the very first poem was "not only a state-poem (my ancient aversion), but a state-poem on the peace of Utrecht".<sup>2</sup> This was Thomas Tickell's "On the Prospect of Peace", first published in 1712 as negotiations were ongoing, which with entire seriousness praised British successes during the wars, military heroes such as the Duke of Marlborough, and the British representatives at the peace congress, the Bishop of Bristol and the Earl of Strafford. Gray's opinion was far from universal, however. Tickell's poem was something of a bestseller when it originally appeared, and its inclusion in Dodsley's *Collection* seems to have done little harm to what became one of the most successful anthologies of the century. A number of other works originally composed as state poems achieved a greater or lesser degree of popularity and longevity, the best known probably being Alexander Pope's *Windsor-Forest*, which was also published in celebration of the Peace of Utrecht.<sup>3</sup> Where the university collections of state poems in Latin (and often in other learned languages) were concerned, expensively bound presentation copies would be sent to members of the royal family, the court, and leading politicians, as a form of what would now be called a public relations exercise. There is evidence, however, that their

1 Brean Hammond, "Verse Satire", in *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, ed. Christine Gerrard (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 369–385, at 371.

2 Gray to Walpole (undated, but January or February 1748), in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray*, 3 vols., eds. Paget Toynbee, Leonard Whibley and H.W. Starr (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), I, 295.

3 [Robert Dodsley, ed.] *A Collection of Poems, in six volumes, by several hands*, enlarged edition (London: J. Dodsley, 1770), I, 3–21; E. Audra and Aubrey Williams, ed., *Alexander Pope: Pastoral Poetry and An Essay on Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1961), 123–194; Christine Gerrard, "Poetry, Politics, and the Rise of Party", in Christine Gerrard, ed., *A Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 7–22, at 11.

contents attracted wider attention, and these university volumes were used as source material by compilers of anthologies of Neo-Latin verse which enjoyed a more general readership.<sup>4</sup>

## 2 Latin and University Commemorations

A volume duly appeared from Oxford's Clarendon Press after the Utrecht celebration, which was described on its title-page as being in honor of "Anna Pacifica", Queen Anne the Peacemaker, and which both conformed to this tradition and differed from it in some respects.<sup>5</sup> It was somewhat shorter than the Cambridge volume produced for the same occasion.<sup>6</sup> It included a single poem in English, by Joseph Trapp, the Professor of Poetry, which was not in itself that unusual, though English poems in these collections were outnumbered about ten to one by those in Latin.<sup>7</sup> All the other poems in this volume, however, were in Latin, fourteen in hexameters and four in lyric metres, whereas it was often the case that the university anthologies included poems in Greek and sometimes more unusual languages which might have been unintelligible to most of those who looked through their pages, but which were nevertheless guaranteed to impress. The 1702 Oxford volume which commemorated the death of William III and the accession of Anne, for example, consisted mostly of poems in Latin (and none in English), but also included several in Greek, as well as examples in Hebrew, Persian, Arabic, Anglo-Saxon, and Cornish.<sup>8</sup> Its 1713 successor offered readers a reminder of the world beyond Europe in a different manner, however, by including not one but two poems by members of

4 David Money, "Free Flattery or Servile Tribute? Oxford and Cambridge Commemorative Poetry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", in James Raven, ed., *Free Print and Non-Commercial Publishing since 1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 48–66. On British Latin verse in the period more generally, see Leicester Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae: A History of Anglo-Latin Poetry, 1500–1925* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1940), especially Chapter VIII, pp. 226–296, and D.K. Money, *The English Horace: Anthony Alsop and the Tradition of British Latin Verse* (Oxford University Press for the British Academy, 1998).

5 *Academiae Oxoniensis Comititia Philologica In Theatro Sheldoniano Decimo Die Julii A.D. 1713. Celebrata: In Honorem Serenissimae Reginae Annae Pacificae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1713). The volume is unpaginated. A digitized version is available online in the ECCO (Eighteenth Century Collections Online) database.

6 Money, *English Horace*, 236–238.

7 Money, *English Horace*, 234.

8 *Pietas Universitatis Oxoniensis in Obitum Augustissimi Regis Gulielmi III. et Gratulatio in exoptatissimam Serenissimae Annae Reginae Inaugurationem* (Oxford: Sheldonian Theatre, 1702).

the university from Barbados, a Caribbean colony which was both strategically important and a major contributor to Britain's economic prosperity through its twin roles as an entrepôt in the transatlantic slave trade and as an exporter of sugar produced by the labor of enslaved Africans and their descendants. One of these poems, by John Maynard (b. 1692), a fellow commoner of St John's College, offers a justification of the slave trade, and I have discussed this elsewhere.<sup>9</sup> The other, titled *Commercium ad Mare Australe* ("The South Sea Trade"), is by John Alleyn or Alleyne (1695–1730) of Magdalen College. Placed at the intersection of Neo-Latin literature and Caribbean literature, two fields which are not normally thought of together, Alleyn's poem sheds light on both in a number of important ways.

### 3 Alleyn and Latin Verse Composition as Cultural Capital

Alleyn himself is a reminder that literary culture in the long eighteenth century is very largely an elite culture. In the 1713 volume, authors' names are not given with their poems, but are instead listed in the order of proceedings for the public recitations in the Sheldonian Theatre printed at the beginning. Here Alleyn is described as "Reynoldi Alleyn de Barbadoes Arm[igeri] fil[ius]", that is, "son of Reynold Alleyn of Barbados, gentleman", which identifies him as a member of a family prominent among the island's landed elite, which dominated the ownership of sugar plantations. His father was Reynold Alleyne (1672–1722) of Four Hills, Barbados, a Member of the Barbados House of Assembly (the lower house of the colonial legislature), and a descendant of a Reynold Alleyne (or Allen) who was living in Barbados by 1630 (only a few years after the English settlement of the island), when he was one of the members of Governor Hawley's Council, and who died on the island in 1651. John Alleyn(e), the writer of the poem under discussion, was born in Barbados on 23 December 1695, and matriculated at Magdalen College, Oxford, on 14 January 1711/2, though he does not appear to have gone on to take a degree. He had been admitted to the Middle Temple in 1710. He married the daughter of another Barbadian planter in London in 1718, and later returned to the island, where it is said that "although frequently pressed to take part in public affairs he declined to do so". He died at Bath in England in 1730. His son Sir John Gay Alleyne (1724–1801)

9 Gilmore, John T., "Sub herili venditur Hasta': An early eighteenth-century justification of the Slave Trade by a colonial poet", in Yasmin Haskell and Juanita Feros Ruys, ed., *Latinity and Alterity in the Early Modern Period*, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, Volume 360 (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 221–239.

was for many years Speaker of the Barbados House of Assembly and one of the most prominent figures in Barbados, while one of his daughters, Rebecca Alleyne (1725–1764), married an English peer.<sup>10</sup> At Oxford, his heritage gave John Alleyn a claim to status recognized by the fact that the order of proceedings also identified him as “Sup[er]ioris] Ord[inis] Commens[alis]”, that is, a fellow-commoner of his college. Fellow-commoners were so called because they enjoyed the privilege of dining – eating their commons – at the high table with the college fellows. While they paid for this, gentlemanly or noble rank was expected. Fellow commoners were also not expected to exert themselves unduly when it came to academic tasks, although learning was considered acceptable if it was worn lightly.<sup>11</sup> Contributions by those of rank figured prominently in the Latin verse in the commemorative volumes published by the universities, to the extent that it appears certain that the social status of their authors was a factor in their inclusion. In at least some cases, these efforts were polished up by the tutors of the young gentlemen who got the credit for them, and we know of a few examples which appear to have been ghost-written in their entirety.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, the fact that the names of so many sons of

10 While the family name is usually spelt Alleyne, I continue to refer to the writer as Alleyn, since this is what he is called in both publications where his poem appears. Genealogical information about the Alleynes may be found in a series of articles by Louise R. Allen [*sic*] originally published in the *Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* and collected in James C. Brandow, comp., *Genealogies of Barbados Families, from Caribbeana and the Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1983). See also: Joseph Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses ... 1500–1714* (Oxford, 1891), I, 17; John [T.] Gilmore, “Alleyne, Sir John Gay, first baronet (1724–1801)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edition, 2004; H.A.C. Sturgess, comp., *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple: From the Fifteenth Century to the year 1944* (3 vols., London: Published for the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple by Butterworth, 1949), I, 266. Louise Allen says he “received honorary degree of M.A.” (Brandow, 21), but this is not mentioned by Foster.

11 On fellow commoners in the period, see Christopher Wordsworth, *Social Life at the English Universities in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co., 1874), 97–110, 646–7. On “commensalis”, see the English to Latin section of Thomas Morell, ed., *Robert Ainsworth's Dictionary, English and Latin*, new ed. (London: Charles Rivington and William Woodfall, 1773; unpaginated), where the Latin equivalent of “A fellow commoner” is given as “Socius convictor” or “commensalis”. “Commensalis” is not a classical word, and Morell gives it in the Latin to English part only in a supplementary list headed “Index Vocum, Ab iis, qui Latine scribere velint, vitandarum” (“Index of words to be avoided by those who may wish to write Latin”), where it is defined as “A boarder, a fellow-commoner”.

12 Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, 214–5; Money, *English Horace*, 232–3. For a particularly interesting example of a young nobleman who was given a prominent position in two Oxford anthologies, but whose poems, in English as well as Latin, would appear to have benefited



gentlemen and noblemen appeared in these anthologies, along with those of heads of colleges, university officials, and humbler scholars, served to confirm that Latin verse was a form of cultural capital, and that its production and consumption were activities befitting an educated gentleman. Some such gentlemen certainly felt it was worth their while to put in enough effort to be able to write their own Latin verses, and even after the end of their formal education retained enough of an interest to provide a readership for the very considerable quantities of modern Latin poetry which were printed and published, or circulated in manuscript in Britain in the long eighteenth century.

There seems to be no information available about Alleyn's earlier education, and we do not know where he originally learnt Latin or was taught the art of Latin verse composition. It might have been in Barbados, where there is evidence of Latin being taught by the later seventeenth century, or he might have been sent to school in Britain at an early age, like many sons of wealthy Caribbean families. Nor can we be certain as to the extent to which he might have been helped in the composition of what appears to be his one surviving Latin poem, though the final version we have is clearly shaped by someone who had spent considerable time practising a skill which was, after all, taught as an essential part of western European educational systems. There is nothing that unusual about Alleyn's writing in Latin: the earliest published poet identifiably born in a British Caribbean colony appears to be Christopher Codrington (1668–1710), who wrote poetry in Latin as well as in English, while there are at least a dozen or so other eighteenth-century Caribbean writers of Latin verse.<sup>13</sup> That the Caribbean was part of a literary culture which spanned the Atlantic and was to a significant extent bilingual in English and Latin is demonstrated by a work like John Beveridge's *Epistolae Familiares*, which published Latin verse epistles between Beveridge and correspondents in Scotland, the North American colonies, and the Bahamas.<sup>14</sup> A number of poems in English

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from "active collaboration by his seniors, to say the least", see C.S.L. Davies, "John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester: His Childhood and Experience at Oxford", *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 81, no. 2 (Summer 2018), 171–189.

- 13 John [T.] Gilmore, "The British Empire and the Neo-Latin Tradition: The Case of Francis Williams", in Barbara Goff, ed., *Classics and Colonialism* (London: Duckworth, 2005), 92–106. Codrington is a figure well known to historians of the Caribbean; see, e.g., Vincent T. Harlow, *Christopher Codrington, 1668–1710* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928). He was the author of a short Latin poem in praise of William III, published in *Academiae Oxoniensis Gratulatio Pro Exoptato Serenissimi Regis Guilielmi [sic] ex Hibernia Reditu* (Oxford, 1690; unpaginated). I hope to discuss Codrington as a literary figure in more detail in another publication.
- 14 John Beveridge, *Epistolae Familiares et alia quaedam Miscellanea: Familiar Epistles and other Miscellaneous Pieces* (Philadelphia: William Bradford, for the Author, 1765). For a

originally written or printed and published in the Caribbean were later published in the British Isles, and a few went into more than one edition, such as James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* (1764) and John Singleton's *General Description of the West-Indian Islands* (1767).<sup>15</sup> Alleyn's poem, on the other hand, appears to be the only example of a Latin poem by a British Caribbean author to have been reprinted in the eighteenth century. After its appearance in the 1713 Oxford collection, it was included in an anthology published four years later under the title *Musarum Anglicanarum Analecta: sive Poëmatum quorundam melioris notae, seu hactenus Ineditorum, seu sparsim Editorum. Vol. III*. This claimed, in other words, to be a continuation of the *Musarum Anglicanarum Analecta* (a title which in effect meant "Selected Latin poems by English writers"), an anthology originally published in one volume in 1692 and expanded with considerable additional material into two volumes for its second edition in 1699, with four further editions in the course of the eighteenth century. The so-called "third volume" was printed at Oxford's Clarendon Press, and with the official approval of the university's vice-chancellor, but this was at the expense of a commercial bookseller, Antony Peisley, who presumably hoped it would be a remunerative venture. As well as Alleyn's poem, it included several more from the 1713 volume, as well as others from different sources. While the "third volume" can be found bound up to make sets with volumes of the 1714 or 1721 editions of the original anthology, it was never reprinted and the contents were not absorbed into the later editions. While there would seem to be some justice in Bradner's assessment that the "third volume" was an "unauthorized continuation", whose contents "did not share in the popularity enjoyed by the poems in the authorized volumes", Peisley, or whoever made the selection on his behalf, must have assumed that Alleyn's poem, like the others chosen, would have had some appeal for the not inconsiderable market for modern Latin verse.<sup>16</sup>

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detailed study of Beveridge's collection, see Sara Hale, "The 'epistolary ode' in British neo-Latin poetry, 1680–1765", PhD thesis, Department of Classics, King's College, London, 2018, chapter 4.

- 15 See John [T.] Gilmore, *The Poetics of Empire: A Study of James Grainger's The Sugar-Cane* (London: Athlone Press, 2000); and Gilmore, "'Too oft allur'd by Ethiopic charms'? Sex, Slaves and Society in John Singleton's *A General Description of the West-Indian Islands* (1767)", in *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature*, Vol. 38, no. 1 (January 2007), 75–94.
- 16 *Musarum Anglicanarum Analecta: sive Poëmatum quorundam melioris notae, seu hactenus Ineditorum, seu sparsim Editorum. Vol. III*. (Oxon. E Typographeo Clarendoniano, Impensis Ant. Peisley Bibliopol. MDCCXVII.), 28–31; Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, 212–225, 363, 364.

## 4 The Poem and the Wider Context of Neo-Latin Literature

What of Alleyn's poem itself? In form, it is entirely conventional, consisting of just under a hundred lines of Latin hexameters, a respectable length for the kind of collection in which it originally appeared. While the hexameter was regarded as suitable for elevated topics because of its use by Virgil, the great exemplar of classical Latin poetry, its versatility was demonstrated by the satires of Horace and Juvenal, or by its adoption for mock heroic poems such as the *De ludo scaccorum* ("On the game of chess") of the Italian Renaissance writer Marco Girolamo Vida (1485–1566), or the *Muscipula* ("The Mousetrap"; first published 1709) of Alleyn's contemporary Edward Holdsworth (1684–1746), both of which were popular with eighteenth-century British readers. On the other hand, the hexameter was, along with the pentameter with which it might be combined to form elegiac couplets, the most basic metre learnt by schoolboys who aspired or were obliged to write Latin verses. It was regarded as less difficult than the lyric metres particularly associated with the *Odes* of Horace, and we may note that in the 1713 Oxford collection in which Alleyn's poem originally appeared, the Latin poems in hexameters outnumber those in lyric metres by more than three to one. Not everybody could be a Virgil, but with enough practice a significant proportion of schoolboys and young men could learn to produce hexameters and elegiac couplets which were at least adequate.

Alleyn's versification is technically competent. His choice of vocabulary is almost entirely classical, with the exception of proper names, such as "Harleius" (l. 6) for Robert Harley (1661–1724), Earl of Oxford, and Lord Treasurer from 1711, the leading figure in the government, who is praised as the man responsible for a peace so favourable to Britain, and "aestus Lemarii" (ll. 21–2) for the passage between Tierra del Fuego and the Isla de los Estados, leading to Cape Horn, so called because it was discovered by a Dutch expedition commanded by Jacob Lemaire in 1616.<sup>17</sup> Alleyn treats Chile in Latin as if it were a Greek noun, which allows him in the two places where it appears (ll. 22, 87) to use a Latin genitive which happens to be identical with the English one (Chiles = Chile's). Tricks such as this probably impressed his original audience. He makes use of tags, words and phrases borrowed from classical writers, in a manner habitual among eighteenth-century writers of Latin verse. It is not

17 "Aestus" is not, strictly speaking, the Lemaire Strait itself, which would be "fretum", but refers to the sea within it. With its suggestion of turbulence, "aestus" is an appropriate term for a notoriously rough and difficult passage: compare Horace, *Odes* II, vii, 15–6, "te ... / unda fretis tulit aestuosis" ("the wave carried you on stormy waters").

always clear whether these are meant to suggest deliberate echoes of their sources, or are simply being used because they are metrically convenient or just vocabulary which has been absorbed by frequent use or derived from a popular handbook for Latin versifiers like the *Gradus ad Parnassum*.<sup>18</sup> In the opening lines, for example, when we find “composta” for “composita”, we may note that this has Virgilian precedent, and indeed, that Virgil, like Alleyn, associates the word with “pax”: in Alleyn, after the noise and tumult of war, Europe has fallen silent, “composta *Pace*” (“with peace” – or perhaps “the Peace”, as the emphasizing italics in the original might suggest – “having been settled”), while in Virgil (*Aeneid*, I, 249), Antenor, having founded Patavium, “nunc placida compostus pace quiescit” (“now rests, settled in calm peace”).

A number of similar examples suggest that such tags have simply become the common currency of the Neo-Latin poet, to be employed as and when they come in handy. A possible exception is the part of the description of the barren coast, where Alleyn says that nothing grows there, and his “non laeta Seges” (“no joyful harvest”, l. 28) would almost certainly have reminded his listeners and later readers of the “laetas segetes” in the opening line of the *Georgics*, and his addition of “Non ipsum infelix Lolium” (“not the wretched lolium itself”) a couple of lines later adds another Virgilian echo. “Lolium” was a kind of weed, for which various translations were offered by modern lexicographers, and while it was a word found in other writers, the phrase “infelix lolium” occurs in a line found in *Eclogues*, V, 37, and *Georgics*, I, 154.<sup>19</sup> The lolium is “infelix” not because it is itself unhappy, but because, as a weed which damages food-crops, it is capable of causing unhappiness to others – Virgil applies the same adjective to the Trojan Horse (*Aeneid*, II, 244–5). Alleyn’s use of “sterilis” in his next line emphasises the echo of Virgil, who uses the word in the same line about the lolium, but Alleyn’s “sterilis Tellus” is a stock phrase which can be found in, e.g., Lucan’s *Pharsalia* (IX, 696). Perhaps more relevant is the line in Ovid’s description of Scythia, “triste solum, sterilis, sine fruge, sine arbore tellus” (*Metamorphoses*, VIII, 789; “a wretched soil, a barren land without fruits or trees”). The accumulation of these particular echoes within the space of a few lines suggests that, here at least, Alleyn is deliberately drawing attention to them as a means of demonstrating his own cleverness by showing off his

18 See the entry by David Butterfield on “*Gradus ad Parnassum* and other verse composition manuals”, in Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal and Charles Fantazzi, ed., *Brill’s Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 981–3.

19 Morell’s edition of Ainsworth’s *Dictionary* defines lolium as “A weed growing among corn, called ray, darnel, cockle, or tares” and cites a passage in Plautus. The English edition of the *Gradus ad Parnassum*, first published by the Company of Stationers in 1686 and many times reprinted, only cites the line from the *Eclogues*.

ability to use his knowledge of Virgil and other classical authors by adapting them to his own ends.

There is nothing exceptional in Alleyn's treatment of Latin verse as a medium, nor does the level of skill displayed appear to be beyond that which could have been obtained by him or any other seventeen-year-old who had been educated in a system which regarded accomplishment in Latin verse composition as both desirable in itself and an important indicator of general intellectual ability. Even if we allow for the possibility that a friend or tutor helped him to polish a few of the finer details, this suggests that the poem as we have it is very likely to be largely or entirely his own composition. This, in turn, makes its content interesting, as a glimpse into the mindset of a member of a colonial elite in the expanding British Empire of the early eighteenth century. Alleyn creates an epyllion which mythologises the naval exploits and commercial pursuits in the Americas of the "Britones, justaque cupidine lucri / Ardentes" (ll. 33–4; "the British, burning with a just desire for gain"). While England might consider herself happy enough now that peace has been restored, and might wish simply to enjoy "secura Quies" (l. 4; "safe repose"), Harley, that "Vir providus" (l. 6; "far-seeing man"), has grander ideas: "nova Sceptra remotis / Invenit in terris, aliumque ANNAE indicat Orbem" (ll. 10–11; "he finds new sceptres in far off lands, and shows another world to Anna"). This refers to the "Commercium ad Mare Australe", the South Sea Trade of the title, though, as we shall see, Alleyn's treatment of this is far from realistic. We then get a description of anthropomorphized ships which may remind some readers of the Trojan ships in Virgil (*Aeneid* IX, 77–122) which were transformed into sea-nymphs: Virgil's ships were "defunctae finem" (IX, 98; "had accomplished their task"), while Alleyn's are "defunctae bello" (l. 12; "done with war"). They are not idle, however, "sed munere digno / Ornatae" (ll. 14–5; "adorned with a worthy duty"), they set out to sea once more, "exaucturae Opibus, quos defendere, *Britannos*" (l. 16; "to increase exceedingly in wealth the Britons they have defended"). The Latin "opes" suggests both "wealth" and "power", and its use here indicates Alleyn's belief that British power and influence depends on the acquisition of wealth from overseas.

The ships cross the Atlantic to Brazil, and then head to the River Plate, or the land of the Patagonians, who are described, following a common European belief of the time, as "Prole Gigantea notos" (l. 21; "famous for their gigantic race"), or rounds the southern tip of South America to head for Chile. The exact location of the barren landscape which they then encounter remains somewhat vague. A striking feature of Alleyn's description of it is the way he compares its appearance to that of a "praedives Avarus" ("a most wealthy miser"), who "inculta squallet facie" ("is filthy and unkempt"; ll. 24–5). Appearances are

deceptive, however, and “turpis Egestas / Mendaci ore sedet” (ll. 26–7; “shameful want sits on his lying face”). While the country may appear to have nothing to offer, “Tamen intus abundat / Vis larga Argenti, et rudis Auri pondera crescunt” (ll. 31–2; “Within, however, abounds a mighty store of silver, and pounds of raw gold grow”).

The British are apparently already aware of this fact, for this is the point at which they are “burning with a just desire for gain”, and they land and greet the country “alacri ... clamore” (“with cheerful shout”; ll. 33–4). They are met by the “Indigenae *Austerales*” (l. 35; “southern natives”). It becomes clear that these are not Spanish or Creole colonists, but Amerindian peoples; they are referred to later as “Indi” (l. 66; “Indians”). It is interesting that almost nothing is said about their physical appearance. They are not, for example, described by any sort of color adjective such as “fuscus” (“dark, tawny”), which was conventionally applied to the Indians of India by both classical and Neo-Latin writers. Tibullus refers to “comites fusci, quos India torret” (II, iii, 55; “dark companions whom India scorches”), while the Scottish Neo-Latin poet Sir William Scott of Thirlestane (c. 1674–1725) describes a parrot sent “fuscis ... ab Indis” (“from the dark Indians”).<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, Alleyn’s “Indigenae *Austerales*” are othered in various ways. They are armed with “jacula” (l. 39; “throwing spears”), whereas the British have “gladii” (l. 44; “swords”), presumably more civilized weapons. A few lines later, we might be surprised by the British having “tela ... horrida” (ll. 44–5; “fearful weapons”), since “telum” is originally a weapon which can be thrown, something more or less synonymous with “jaculum”.<sup>21</sup> Even in classical usage, however, “telum” could mean a weapon of any kind, and by the eighteenth century the word could be used to refer to firearms, which would seem to be the case here.<sup>22</sup> The Indians “saltant/horrendum” (ll. 38–9; “they dance in a frightful manner”). The adjectives “ferox” (l. 39; “wild, cruel”) and “barbarus” (l. 46, “savage”) are applied to their hearts. They have “monilia” (l. 75;

20 Sir William Scott of Thirlestane, Bart., “Psittacus ad D. E \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ Dominam suam”, in [Robert Freebairn, ed.], *Selecta Poemata Archibaldi Pitcairni Med. Doctoris, Gulielmi Scoti a Thirlestane, Equitis, Thomae Kincadii, Civis Edinburgensis, et Aliorum* (Edinburgh: n.p., 1727), 126. For a translation and discussion of this poem, see John [T.] Gilmore, “Parrots, Poets and Philosophers: Language and Empire in the Eighteenth Century”, *EnterText* 2.2 (Summer 2003), 84–102, at <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/creative-writing/research/enter-text/documents/enterext022/John-Gilmore-Parrots-Poets-and-Philosophers-Language-and-Empire-in-the-Eighteenth-Century.pdf>.

21 The *Gradus ad Parnassum* indeed gives “telum” as the first of several possible synonyms for “jaculum”.

22 Morell’s edition of Ainsworth’s *Dictionary* offers “Bombarda”, “scloppus”, and “tormentum” as equivalents for “A gun”, but not “telum”; “Out of gun shot” is given as “Extra teli jactum”, and “Within gun shot” as “Intra teli jactum”.

"necklaces") and "Daedaleas plumas" (l. 76; "Daedalian feathers"). Feathers were and are used in various forms of ornament by many Amerindian peoples, and this fact featured prominently in accounts by European writers from the earliest period of contact; see, for example, the references in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* (1688). While Europeans themselves sometimes used feathers for personal adornment, feathers could be treated as an all-purpose marker of the exotic: the African king in John Maynard's poem has both "Monilia" and "plumae".<sup>23</sup> In contrast, Alleyn describes the British as having "cristae" (l. 45), which recently terrified the French; while this ought to mean something like "crests", perhaps suggesting decorative items not that different from the Amerindians' "plumae", but the word seems to have been chosen in order to be different. Since neither feathered hats or helmets with horse-hair crests of the kind later associated with nineteenth-century cuirassier regiments were common in military uniforms of Alleyn's time, his "cristae" may refer to the tall peaks of the mitre-like (and featherless) caps of British grenadier regiments.<sup>24</sup>

Alleyn describes the Amerindians as already aware of the fame of the British and as impressed by their "roseas ... genas" and "formosa ... / corpora" (ll. 41–2; "rosy cheeks" and "handsome bodies") as well as by their sophisticated weapons, and rush to greet them. In one particularly vivid detail, they kiss the swords of the British, which are "sanguine tinctis / Hispano" (ll. 43–4; "stained with Spanish blood"). The Spanish had been allies of the French during the recently ended wars. But this detail seems to refer to the so-called "Black Legend" popular among British writers, which laid great emphasis on real and alleged cruelties perpetrated by the Spanish against the indigenous peoples of the Americas during conquest and colonization, partly in order to make the not entirely plausible suggestion that British colonization was much more benevolent. Nevertheless, the British never lose sight of why they are visiting their new friends, and immediately want to know where the gold is to be found and go wandering about in search of it. It gleams and tinkles beneath their feet, but if the British "laetus miles" (l. 56; "happy soldier") or "novus advena" (l. 60; "newly arrived stranger") turns up the soil or searches through the alluvial sands, he does so purely in an exploratory manner, and is quite happy to look on as a "nudus fossor" (l. 62; "naked miner") does the actual work which makes the next scene possible.

The Amerindians now sing the praises of Queen Anne: Alleyn's "Quid foemina fecit / barbara gens canit" (ll. 68–9; "A savage race sings what a woman

23 Gilmore, "Sub herili", p. 230.

24 See illustrations in Michael Barthorp and Angus McBride, *Marlborough's Army 1702–11* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1980).

has done") may have reminded some of Virgil's "dux femina facti" (*Aeneid*, I, 364; "a woman was leader of the deed"), referring to Dido's leadership of the Phoenician colony which established Carthage. Contemporary panegyric, in both English and Latin, routinely praised Queen Anne's rule as the source of Britain's success and prosperity and even suggested that British military successes were ultimately due to her, though what a modern historian has described as her "nearly perpetual pregnancy, frequent illness and deleterious corpulence" made her an unlikely candidate for the role of warrior queen.<sup>25</sup> Alleyn's reference to her (l. 68) as "Victrix ANNA", "Victorious Anna", or even "the conquering Anna", is thus nothing exceptional.

The Amerindians hasten to load the ships with a range of gifts for the British and their queen, not only necklaces and feathers, but also "vasti Ponderis Aurum, / Argentumque ingens" (ll. 76–7; "gold of enormous weight, and much silver"). This perhaps looks back to the simile of the unkempt miser, which may suggest that wealth has no true value unless it is put to good use, instead of simply hoarded. We are shown the Amerindians apparently happy to pass on their treasures to the British, who, so it is implied, have a better claim to them, since they will know what to do with them. What might initially seem the slightly curious detail of "Commercia" (l. 70; "Trade"), choosing to join in the Amerindians' praise of Queen Anne foreshadows the conclusion in which we are treated to a vision of the world's wealth flowing into the Thames, and a claim for the significance of the poet's native Barbados in this ever-growing imperial prosperity. It is these final passages which allow us to interpret the poem as a whole.

First, the River Thames is told "totos pande sinus" (l. 78), in a phrase borrowed from Juvenal (I, 150), where it appears in the same position at the beginning of a line. In Juvenal, it refers to spreading one's sails, and is used in a metaphorical sense to urge the satirist to make every effort possible. While Alleyn's borrowing is a convenient way to fill up a hexameter line, he is making it work in other ways too. "Sinus" (here in the plural) can mean curves or hollows of any kind, so here it might suggest the sails of the ships which set out from the Thames on trading voyages, or be used mainly in a geographical

25 Elizabeth Lane Furdell, "The Medical Personnel at the Court of Queen Anne", *The Historian*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (May 1986), 412–429, at 429. For an example of this theme in Neo-Latin verse, see John [T.] Gilmore, "Schoolboy patriotism and gender stereotypes in the reign of Queen Anne", in David Money, ed., 1708: *Oudenarde and Lille, A Tercentenary Commemoration in Prose and Verse* (Cambridge: Bringfield's Head Press, 2008), 106–109. The tone of much English panegyric is summed up in Pope's couplet (*Windsor-Forest*, ll. 41–2), "Rich industry sits smiling on the Plains, / And Peace and Plenty tell, a STUART reigns" (Audra and Williams, ed. cit., 152).



sense, of the curves of the river, filled with ships as it flowed through London, past its many wharves.<sup>26</sup> Appropriately, in the context of Alleyn's poem, the Latin word could also refer to hollows or hiding places where money could be kept, such as pockets or purses (compare, e.g., Ovid, *Amores*, I, x, 18), for he goes on to tell the river to receive the wealth which will be brought to it from all corners of the globe. This is referred to as (ll. 79–81) "Primitiae" ("first fruits", suggesting that there will be a significant increase in such acquisitions as a result of the Peace – a suggestion strengthened by the "nunc", "now", in the following line), "munera" ("gifts"), and even "luxus", a rather loaded word meaning luxuries or things which would impress because of the money which would have been spent on them: a concept which for eighteenth-century readers, as well as for ancient Romans, often had negative connotations.<sup>27</sup> We are told (l. 80) that "Indus uterque" ("each of the Indies") would be zealous in competing to send gifts to the Thames. The "two Indies", or "both Indies", that is, the East and the West Indies, were common expressions in the eighteenth century, probably best known from the title of the Abbé Raynal's *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des européens dans les deux Indes* (1780). Alleyn's "Indus uterque", however, was also part of the motto on the coat of arms of Jamaica used during the colonial period and dating from 1661: "Indus uterque serviet uni" ("Both the Indies will serve one [master]").<sup>28</sup> If the echo of the Jamaica motto is deliberate, this could be seen as giving added force to Alleyn's claim for the importance of his native Barbados in an expanding British Empire at the conclusion of his poem. Jamaica had been acquired as an English colony in 1655, a generation later than the settlement of Barbados in 1627, and was slower to develop as a sugar producer, but by 1713 Jamaica was rivalling Barbados in exports of sugar, the region's most valuable commodity,

26 See John Rocque's map of London, reproduced in Ralph Hyde, intro., *The A–Z of Georgian London* (London: London Topographical Society, 1982), especially sheets 13–16, showing the stretch of the Thames from London Bridge to Limehouse. Although not published until 1747, Rocque's map was based on a survey begun in 1739 and shows a London which would have been very similar to that known to Alleyn.

27 Morell, s.v., defines "luxus" as "Riot, excess, profuseness, extravagancy", and only after that as "Also state, magnificence".

28 Officially granted by King Charles II, the coat of arms, including the motto, was said to have been designed by William Sancroft (1617–93), later Archbishop of Canterbury (1677–90); see Frank Cundall, *Historic Jamaica* (London: West India Committee, for the Institute of Jamaica, 1915), 182–3. The choice of wording in turn echoes a phrase in Horace (*Odes* II, ii, 11–12).

and would soon be on its way to outpace all competitors as the dominant producer for the rest of the century.<sup>29</sup>

Alleyn finishes by directly addressing his “chara mihi patria” (l. 94; “fatherland”, or “native country, dear to me”). This can only refer specifically to Barbados, especially when it is described as “luxurians nativo nectare tellus” (l. 94; “a land abounding in its native nectar”). While “nectar” was the drink of the gods in classical mythology, and so might at first here suggest rum, it seems more likely that Alleyn is referring to the juice of the sugar-cane, which was the raw material processed to yield the all-important sugar as a commodity to be exported from Barbados to Britain (with rum being only a by-product).<sup>30</sup> The poet tells Barbados that it should join in the general rejoicing, and no longer complain about being at the geographical limit of Queen Anne’s rule; since this now extends to the south, and, it is implied, far to the south, Barbados will now be in the middle of the globe and of the British Empire. The poem ends on the words “Imperiiue Britanni”, suggesting that Alleyn sees no contradiction between his assertion of a Barbadian identity, and the significance of Barbados to Britain, and his enthusiastic loyalty to the British Empire as a whole. It is noteworthy, however, that his choice of vocabulary suggests something rather different from the well-known and much debated idea of Barbados as “Little England” (which only appears to have come into circulation in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century).<sup>31</sup> Maynard’s poem ends with an image of an “*Angliacus Dominus*”, an “English master”, in the Tropics, enjoying his lemonade in the shade.<sup>32</sup> In Alleyn, by contrast, words specifically suggesting England or Englishness (“Anglia”, ll. 5, 89; “Anglicum”, l. 97) are significantly outnumbered by words referring to Britishness (“Britonas”, l. 3; “Britannos”, ll. 16, 37, 47; “Britones”, ll. 33, 87; “Britannis”, l. 66; “Britanni”, l. 98). As can be seen from the case of Christopher Codrington, whose “Indian wit” (that is, West Indian) was attacked by a poetic rival and the fact that his education had been paid for by his father’s “sugar” made the subject of criticism, the idea of the Caribbean-born white creole being different was already

29 See tables of production figures in Noel Deerr, *The History of Sugar*, 2 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1949–50), I, 193–204. The enormous growth of the Cuban sugar industry was a nineteenth-century phenomenon (*ibid.*, I, 131).

30 The *Gradus ad Parnassum* suggests among suitable adjectives for “nectar” both “dulce” and “suave”, both conveying the idea of sweetness – not just in the sense of “pleasant”, but specifically sweet as opposed to sour, as it treats “dulcis”, “suavis” and “melleus” (“honeyed”) as synonyms.

31 David Lambert, *White Creole Culture, Politics and Identity during the Age of Abolition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13–15.

32 Gilmore, “Sub herili ...”, pp. 232–3, 235.

established before the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>33</sup> For at least some of his English contemporaries, Alleyn would have been different, a colonial, not English, but he can lay claim to a British identity, an idea given topicality by the still recent Act of Union between England and Scotland (1707).<sup>34</sup> In a similar manner, the later Scottish-Caribbean poet James Grainger uses frequent references to Britain rather than England as part of his attempts to emphasize the importance of the Caribbean colonies, and to stress that Britain is more than just England, and that the British Empire is more than just the British Isles.<sup>35</sup> For Alleyn, his chosen medium is a significant part of his message, as demonstrating his ability to compose Latin verse functions as a claim to membership of an elite literary culture which transcends national boundaries.

## 5 Alleyn, the Americas, and Modern Latin Literature

While the echoes of classical writers in Alleyn's poem are fairly obvious, it is not so easy to demonstrate the extent to which his poem may have been influenced by more modern writers in Latin. Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the way in which mining for gold and silver in the Americas features prominently in some eighteenth-century Latin verse, especially the lengthy poem *Brasilienses Aurifodinae* ("The Gold Mines of Brazil"), which has been attributed to both José Basílio da Gama and Francisco da Silveira, and in the *Rusticatio Mexicana* of Rafael Landívar. However, these belong to a rather later period than Alleyn's poem: the *Brasilienses Aurifodinae* appears to have been composed in the early 1760s and remains in manuscript, while Landívar published his in 1781, with an expanded edition the following year.<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, some aspects of Alleyn's poem do appear to echo earlier Latin works, directly or indirectly. One of the most influential of these, in terms of creating a long-lasting image of the Americas as a potential source of vast wealth, was the

33 [Sir Richard Blackmore], *A Satyr against Wit* (London: Samuel Crouch, 1700), 11, and, by the same author, *Discommendatory verses, on those which are truly commendatory, on the author of the two Arthurs, and the Satyr against Wit* (London: n.p., 1700), 1.

34 On ideas of Britishness in the period, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

35 Gilmore, *Poetics of Empire*, 33–35, and 80–81, n. 102.

36 Alexandra de Brito Mariano, "New World 'Ethiopians': Slavery and Mining in Early Modern Brazil through Latin Eyes", in Haskell and Feros Ruys, ed., *Latinity and Alterity in the Early Modern Period*, 201–220; Desirée Arbo and Andrew Laird, "Columbus, the Lily of Quito, and the Black Legend", *Dieciocho* 38.1 (Spring 2015), 7–32, at 14, n. 21; Andrew Laird, *The Epic of America: An Introduction to Rafael Landívar and the Rusticatio Mexicana* (London: Duckworth, 2006).

Latin translation by Aliander de Cosco of Christopher Columbus's letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella describing what he had seen in the islands of the Caribbean, which was first published in Rome in 1493 and which was soon circulating throughout Europe in different editions and translations. The trope of the naïve generosity of the indigenous people which we see in Alleyn is already there in Columbus, who tells, for example, of how "Accidit in quendam navitam tantum auri pondus habuisse pro una ligula quanti sunt tres aurei solidi" ("it befell one sailor that he had as much weight of gold in exchange for a single lace [i.e., a shoe-lace or lace for holding clothes together] as equalled three gold *solidi*"). Columbus claimed that he had put a stop to his men exploiting the natives by such unequal exchanges, but the greed of Europeans was already thoroughly aroused. Long before the Spanish encountered the very real mineral wealth of Mexico and Peru, and when only small amounts of gold had been acquired in the Caribbean islands, Columbus assured the Spanish monarchs that he would give them "tantum auri ... quantum eis fuerit opus" ("as much gold as they should have need of").<sup>37</sup>

Some of this reappeared less than forty years later in what was to prove one of the most popular Neo-Latin poems, Girolamo Fracastoro's *Syphilis* (first published 1530). This gave its name to the disease which seemed to have appeared out of nowhere and swept through Europe with virulent force at the end of the fifteenth century, and was devoted to a description of its effects, speculation about its origins, and discussion of its treatment. The third and final book of the poem, however, is set in the "nemora alterius foelicia mundi" ("happy groves of another world"; III, 1) where a "magnanimus ... heros" ("great-hearted hero"; III, 104) who is never actually named as Columbus discovers Hispaniola as an "Auri terra ferax" ("land ... fertile in gold"; III, 34). Fracastoro says this is not as important as the fact that the Caribbean also produces the guaiacum or lignum vitae tree, whose wood was widely used in his time, and for long afterwards, as a treatment for syphilis. Nevertheless, he mentions gold again, with an "aurifer amnis" ("gold-bearing river"; III, 145), and "mixtam ... auro ... arenam" ("gold-mingled sand"; III, 150). Soon afterwards, a passage about the natives marveling at the ships, clothing, and weapons of the Europeans is followed by another reference to alluvial gold, "e ripis collectum aurum" ("gold collected from the river banks"; III, 209), which is presented to the visitors

37 Christopher Columbus, trs. Aliander de Cosco, *Epistola de insulis nuper inventis* (Rome: Stephan Plannck, 1493). I have used the facsimile published in Martin Davies, intro. and trs., *Columbus in Italy: An Italian versification of the Letter on the discovery of the New World[.] with facsimiles of the Italian and Latin editions of 1493* (London: British Library, 1991).

along with gifts of corn, fruit and honey. It is at least possible that Alleyn took some hints from these passages: the Latin text of Fracastoro's poem had been reprinted over two dozen times in different parts of Europe by the time Alleyn was an undergraduate, including an appearance in an anthology of Latin verse by Italian writers of the Renaissance published in England in 1684. There was also an English translation by Nahum Tate, which was first published separately in 1686, and then reprinted in several anthologies.<sup>38</sup>

Another possible source which might have been known to Alleyn was *Aurum, Carmen* ("Gold, A Poem") by the French Jesuit, François Antoine Le Febvre, first published in Paris in 1703. Although this only mentioned America in passing as a place with mines of gold and silver, it went on – borrowing the Virgilian phrase "labor improbus" ("shameful" or even "degrading toil"; cf. *Georgics*, I, 145–6) – to describe the work of gold miners in some detail. Le Febvre did not share Alleyn's idea that the pursuit of wealth might be something praiseworthy, and adapted another well-known Virgilian phrase to refer to "dira fames auri" ("dreadful", or "fatal hunger for gold"; cf. *Aeneid*, III, 57), though he created a myth to suggest that the obsessive search for the precious metal was an inescapable part of human nature, since particles of gold had got mixed in with the clay which Prometheus had used to make the first people. While there is no very close verbal resemblance, Alleyn's passage (ll. 23–34) about the barrenness of the landscape, the "sterilis Tellus", where the gold is to be found does seem as though it might be an echo of a passage in which Le Febvre claims that gold mines are most likely to be found in terrain which is not suited to agriculture: "frugibus infelix tellus, nec commoda Baccho" ("A land hostile to crops and not suited to vines").<sup>39</sup>

38 Quotations from Fracastoro (including the English translations) are taken from Geoffrey Eatough, ed., *Fracastoro's Syphilis* (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1984). See also Leona Baumgartner and John F. Fulton, *A Bibliography of the poem Syphilis sive Morbus Gallicus by Girolamo Fracastoro of Verona* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935); Anon., ed., *Anthologia, Seu Selecta Quaedam Poemata Italorum Qui Latine scripserunt* (London: R. Green and F. Hicks, 1684); Nahum Tate, trs., *Syphilis: Or, A Poetical History of the French Disease* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1686). Another issue of the *Anthologia* gives Cambridge as the place of publication; the editorship is usually credited to Francis Atterbury, later Bishop of Rochester (e.g., by Bradner, *Musae Anglicanae*, 6), but Baumgartner and Fulton (47–8) attribute it to Thomas Power.

39 Le Febvre's poem is reprinted in François Oudin and Joseph Olivet, ed., *Poemata Didascalica* (2nd ed., 3 vols., Paris: Auguste Delalain, 1813), I, 205–217. For a detailed analysis, see Yasmin Annabel Haskell, *Loyola's Bees: Ideology and Industry in Jesuit Latin Didactic Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, for the British Academy, 2003), 126–33.

## 6 Neo-Latin, the Vernacular, and Eighteenth-Century Colonialism

Latin verse composition was not a self-contained system, however. As Alleyn's poem as a whole shows, it interacted with contemporary events beyond the world of school and university, and it existed as part of a literary culture which also expressed itself in the vernacular, not as something separate from this. Alleyn's welcoming and generous Amerindians may have been influenced by reports of the "Four Indian Kings", Iroquois allies of the British in their wars with the French in North America, who were brought to the court of Queen Anne in 1710, or he may even have seen them himself.<sup>40</sup> However, while Alleyn writes as a product of a particular sort of classical education which involved a close acquaintance with at least the better known Roman poets and some of their Neo-Latin successors, he may also be responding to contemporary literary texts in English. The section of his poem about the Thames receiving the wealth of the different parts of the world resembles the conclusion to Pope's *Windsor-Forest*, where the Thames is personified as a river-god, who hails the increasing prosperity of a London which is given the classicizing poetical name of Augusta, suggesting its status as capital of a far-flung empire that rivals that of ancient Rome:

Behold! *Augusta's* glitt'ring Spires increase,  
 And Temples rise, the Beauteous Works of Peace.  
 [...]
   
 There Kings shall sue, and suppliant States be seen  
 Once more to bend before a *British QUEEN*.  
 [...]
   
 The Time shall come, when free as Seas or Wind  
 Unbounded Thames shall flow for all Mankind,  
 Whole Nations enter with each swelling Tyde,  
 And Seas but join the Regions they divide;  
 Earth's distant Ends our Glory shall behold,  
 And the new World launch forth to seek the Old.  
 Then Ships of uncouth Form shall stem the Tyde,  
 And Feather'd People crowd my wealthy Side [...]<sup>41</sup>

40 For an account of this episode, and of contemporary literary responses to it, see Richmond P. Bond, *Queen Anne's American Kings* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952).

41 Pope, *Windsor-Forest* (ll. 377–8, 383–4, 397–404), Audra and Williams, ed. cit., 187–191, who suggest (188) that l. 383 may echo Isaiah, lx, 3.

Pope's poem was first published 7 March 1713, some four months before the Oxford celebration of the Peace, so that Alleyn would have had time to come across it while composing his own poem.<sup>42</sup> Even closer parallels appear when we compare Alleyn's poem with Thomas Tickell's "On the Prospect of Peace", which had been published the previous year, and which, at least to begin with, seems to have enjoyed greater popularity than Pope's *Windsor-Forest*.<sup>43</sup> Tickell mentions "the painted kings of India", the "Fearless ... merchant" who "roams securely o'er the boundless main", including to where "nearer suns prepare the rip'ning gem, / To grace great ANNE's imperial diadem", the use of precious metals for coinage, and "Harley's Chili [*sic*] gold".<sup>44</sup>

Alleyn's suggestion that Barbados will be in the middle of the British Empire extends its boundaries to the furthest reaches of South America, and Tickell promises Queen Anne a similar expansion of her rule:

From Albion's cliffs thy wide extended hand  
Shall o'er the main to far Peru command,  
So vast a tract whose wide domain shall run,  
Its circling skies shall see no setting sun.  
Thee, thee an hundred languages shall claim,  
And savage Indians swear by ANNA's name;  
The line and poles shall own thy rightful sway,  
And thy commands the sever'd globe obey.<sup>45</sup>

Britain will benefit at the expense of the French, who will be glad to cede Dunkirk as the price of Queen Anne's friendship, while "Holland repining and in grief cast down, / Sees the new glories of the British crown", and "OXFORD's earl" (i.e., Harley) sets out to dispossess the Spanish of their ill-gotten gains: "The wealthiest glebe to rav'nous Spaniards known / He marks, and makes the golden world our own".<sup>46</sup>

There are two main points where Alleyn differs from Tickell. While Tickell portrays the "Fearless ... merchant" in a positive light, he endeavors to suggest that Britain's triumphal expansion is about much more than simple greed:

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<sup>42</sup> Audra and Williams, ed. cit., 146.

<sup>43</sup> Audra and Williams, ed. cit., 130, n. 7, state that "Six editions of Tickell's poem were issued within two years of publication; *Windsor-Forest* went into three editions in its first two years".

<sup>44</sup> Dodsley, *Collection*, ed. cit., I, 11–13.

<sup>45</sup> Dodsley, *Collection*, ed. cit., I, 16–17.

<sup>46</sup> Dodsley, *Collection*, ed. cit., I, 18–19.

Say, where have e'er her [Britannia's] union-crosses sail'd,  
 But much her arms, her justice more prevail'd?  
 Her labours are to plead th' Almighty's cause,  
 Her pride to teach th' untam'd barbarian laws:  
 Who conquers, wins by brutal strength the prize;  
 But 'tis a godlike work to civilize.<sup>47</sup>

There is nothing of this in Alleyn, whose British sailors and soldiers happily accept the gold and silver they are offered, and make off with them, without enlightening their Amerindian donors as to their potential uses. Secondly, while Alleyn mentions "Nummi futuri" (l. 65), coins to be made from the precious metals collected in South America, Tickell suggests that such coins and medals commemorating the achievements of Britain's military heroes will outlast the English language itself: "O'er distant times such records shall prevail, / When English numbers, antiquated, fail".<sup>48</sup> In a period which had trouble understanding Chaucer, the idea that, as Edmund Waller had put it a generation earlier in his "Of English Verse" (first published 1686), English was something impermanent, "a daily changing tongue", was still a commonplace. Latin, on the other hand, was far from being a dead language (as the declamation of the speeches and poems of Alleyn and his colleagues in Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre demonstrated), but it was what the modern scholar Jürgen Leonhardt has called a "fixed language". As such, it was the potential raw material for many a "monumentum aere perennius" ("monument more lasting than bronze"), in Horace's much quoted phrase (*Odes*, III, xxx, 1). Just as Virgil and Horace could be understood by the eighteenth-century educated reader, so the eighteenth-century writer of Latin verse expected to be intelligible to future generations. The commemorative coins to which Tickell referred would have had their inscriptions, like the "medals of immortal Rome", and like most coins and medals in eighteenth-century Europe, in Latin, not the vernacular. There appeared to be an irrefutable logic in Waller's claim that "Poets that lasting marble seek, / Must carve in Latin or in Greek".<sup>49</sup> While Alleyn does not address the issue directly, by writing Latin verse he is not only vindicating his claim to the status of an educated gentleman, but also making a bid for literary

47 Dodsley, *Collection*, ed. cit., I, 11.

48 Dodsley, *Collection*, ed. cit., I, 12–13.

49 Edmund Waller, "Of English Verse", *The Works of Edmund Waller, Esq; in Verse and Prose* (London: J. and R. Tonson, 1758), 138–9; Richard Hillyer, "Better Read than Dead: Waller's 'Of English Verse'", *Restoration: Studies in English Literary Culture, 1660–1700*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring 1990), 33–43; Jürgen Leonhardt, *Latin: Story of a World Language*, trs. Kenneth Kronenberg, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 17–20.



immortality, staking a claim to remembrance which will be as long-lasting as the new world order which he asserts Britain will benefit from as a result of the Peace of Utrecht.

Not everyone was convinced: only a few years later, George Berkeley could envisage civilization passing from "Europe ... in her decay" to the Americas, and contemplate this as the end of history:

Westward the course of empire takes its way,  
The four first Acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the Drama with the day;  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.<sup>50</sup>

Alleyn, on the other hand, envisages the increase in British power and prosperity brought about by the Peace to be permanent. Grandsons unborn are commanded to rejoice, since Harley, having secured the Peace, opens "Immortalem ... Thesaurum" (l. 84; an "immortal treasury") and spreads out for their benefit "Austrum ... inexhaustum" (ll. 84–5; an "inexhaustible South"). The British will surpass all their rivals, and now – here Alleyn does use "Anglia" (l. 89; "England") – "Armīs positīs, meliōre Metallo / Vulnificum mutat Chalybem" (ll. 89–90), "having laid aside her arms, changes wounding steel for a better metal", that is, gold, asserting that trading dominance is as effective as warfare in increasing national influence. Military might is not to be abandoned, however, for Alleyn claims that the country "crescitque vicissim / Ferro Auroque potens" (ll. 90–91; "grows powerful by iron and by gold in turns"), and will thus be able to enjoy either "Perpetuam ... Pacem" or "aeternos ... Triumphos" (l. 92; "perpetual peace" or "eternal [military] triumphs").

## 7 Omission and Exaggeration

But there are limits to Alleyn's vision, or at least to his expression of it. The Peace of Utrecht was not a single treaty, but a group of treaties and agreements between various European powers. From the British point of view, one of the most important of these was what was referred to as the *Assiento*, an agreement with Spain which gave a British company the monopoly of supplying the

<sup>50</sup> George Berkeley, "Verses, on the Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America", in George Sampson, ed., *The Works of George Berkeley, D.D., Bishop of Cloyne*, 3 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1897–8), II, 125–6. Berkeley's poem was first published in 1752, but probably written in the early 1720s.

Spanish colonies in the Americas with enslaved Africans for a period of thirty years, which was signed in Madrid on 26 March 1713.<sup>51</sup> In terms of the human suffering involved, the agreement authorized the importation of 4,800 *Piezas de India* each year; each *Pieza de India* was an adult male enslaved African in good health, or what was considered to be the equivalent in enslaved persons of lesser value, such as women and children. The company was also to have the right to send one ship a year laden with British goods to sell in the Spanish colonies, thus opening up what had previously been a closed market. While this was considered potentially lucrative, it never brought the returns anticipated, and the company in question, the South Sea Company, had in fact been established in 1711 as part of a scheme for restructuring the British government's debts – it was this, rather than the company's trading activities, which was to lead in 1720 to the extraordinary speculation in its stock which at a much later date came to be known as the South Sea Bubble.<sup>52</sup> Unlike Maynard, whose poem was titled “Assiento, sive Commercium Hispanicum” (“The Assiento, or Spanish Trade”), and who at least acknowledged the fact of British involvement in the slave trade, even if he endeavored to suggest that it was actually for the good of the enslaved, Alleyn does not even mention the Assiento. The same, of course, is true of Pope's *Windsor-Forest*, where Father Thames's celebration of the cessation of hostilities includes the couplet “Oh stretch thy Reign, fair Peace! from Shore to Shore, / Till Conquest cease, and Slav'ry be no more” – a sentiment which did not stop Pope investing in the South Sea Company.<sup>53</sup>

Some of what we may see as Alleyn's failings may be due to his following Tickell too closely as a model. Tickell wrote while the negotiations over the peace settlement were still going on, and a certain amount of speculation and wishful thinking on his part was perhaps to be expected. While Tickell appears to have hoped for Britain to make extensive territorial gains from her enemies, this was not fully realized, and some of his specific details were not borne out by reality. Tickell anticipated, for example “Dunkirk now restor'd / To Britain's empire”, of which it had been a part for a brief period in Charles II's reign.<sup>54</sup> The port was retained by the French, however, even if the terms of the Peace

51 Text of the agreement, in Spanish with English translation, in *The Assiento, or, Contract for Allowing the Subjects of Great Britain the Liberty of Importing Negroes into the Spanish America* (London: John Baskett [et al.], 1713). In modern Spanish, the word is spelt *asiento*, but the form *assiento* is used in the printed text, and this was how it was generally referred to by British writers of the period.

52 Julian Hoppit, “The Myths of the South Sea Bubble”, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series, Vol. 12 (2002), 141–165.

53 Pope, *Windsor-Forest*, ll. 407–8; Audra and Williams, ed. cit., 192.

54 Dodsley, *Collection*, ed. cit., I, 17.

obliged them to demolish its fortifications. While Tickell might be free to fantasize about "Harley's Chili gold", Alleyn was writing after the details had been settled, and he and his audience would almost certainly have been well aware that the Peace was not a licence for Britain to exploit the mineral wealth of South America. A degree of fantasy and exaggeration was characteristic of the state poem as a genre, in both Latin and English: in Addison's Latin poem on the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, for example, the meeting of William III and Peter the Great is compared to the meeting of Hercules and Evander in the *Aeneid*, while the same author's *The Campaign*, on the Battle of Blenheim, referred to the Duke of Marlborough as "the God-like Man" and compared him to Achilles, Aeneas, and an avenging angel.<sup>55</sup>

Nevertheless, Alleyn's poem is so hyperbolic, so deliberately removed from reality, that one is tempted to wonder if it is meant to sound a mock-heroic or satirical note. Even within its own fantastic world, there are details which raise awkward questions. Just who is the "nudus fossor", the "naked miner"? Gold and silver do not spring from the earth unbidden, and the later eighteenth-century poem *Brasilienses Aurifodinae* demonstrates that Neo-Latin verse could be used to give a realistic picture of the hardships involved in South American mining.<sup>56</sup> Alleyn's miner might be an enslaved African, or an Amerindian working under a system of coerced labor not very different from slavery, but it is uncertain whether we are meant to contemplate these possibilities, or simply ignore them. In his imitations of Tibullus, Alleyn's younger contemporary James Hammond (1710–42) saw the parallel between the "dusky Indians" of ancient Rome, and the "black Sons of Afric's sultry Land", as did James Grainger when he quoted this poem of Hammond's in his own collection of translations of Tibullus, a work which was in part designed to suggest that British colonial slavery was nothing like as harsh as Roman slavery had been.<sup>57</sup> Alleyn does nothing of the sort, and makes no overt mention of slavery at all. Even if we assume that he left Barbados when he was very young, in order to be sent to school in England, neither he nor his audience can have been ignorant of the fact that a significant part of Britain's commercial wealth depended on its ever-increasing participation in the transatlantic slave trade, and that

55 Joseph Addison, "Pax Gulielmi auspiciis Europae reddita, 1697", in his *Poems on Several Occasions, with a Dissertation upon the Roman Poets* (London: E. Curl, 1719), 121–132; *The Campaign, A Poem, To His Grace the Duke of Marlborough* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1705).

56 Alexandra de Brito Mariano, "New World 'Ethiopians'"; Laird, *Epic of America*.

57 James Grainger, *A Poetical Translation of the Elegies of Tibullus; and of the Poems of Sulpicia*, 2 vols. (London: A. Millar, 1759), II, 108; John [T.] Gilmore, "Tibullus and the British Empire: Grainger, Smollett and the politics of translation in the mid-18th century", *The Translator*, Vol. 5, No. 1 (April 1999), 1–26.

the production of sugar by enslaved Africans on plantations in the Caribbean was vastly more important than “Harley’s Chili gold”. The gaping absence of Caribbean slavery in his poem, and its replacement by the absurdities of his tableau of thankful Amerindian devotees of Queen Anne, seems designed to call attention to itself. If this is indeed the case, then Alleyn’s bold concluding assertion of the literal and metaphorical centrality of Barbados to Queen Anne’s growing empire seems to be a challenge from the colonial gentleman to his metropolitan peers: do not look down upon me because my rank and position are derived from the profits of slave-grown sugar, for you are very much part of the same system yourselves.

*Commercium ad Mare Australe*

John Alleyn

Text from *Academiae Oxoniensis Comitia Philologica In Theatro Sheldoniano Decimo Die Julii A.D. 1713. Celebrata: In Honorem Serenissimae Reginae Annae Pacificae* (Oxonii, E Typographeo Clarendoniano, An. Dom. MDCCXIII [unpaginated]), collated with that in *Musarum Anglicanarum Analecta: sive Poëmatum quorundam melioris notae, seu hactenus Ineditorum, seu sparsim Editorum. Vol. III.* (Oxon. E Typographeo Clarendoniano, Impensis Ant. Peisley Bibliopol. MDCCXVII.), pp. 28–31.

The differences between the two editions are as follows:

- (1) in 1713, the name and description of the author and his poem appears at the beginning of the volume in the “Ordo Comitiorum Philologicorum”, as

VII. Joh. Alleyn, Reynoldi Alleyn de Barbadoes Arm. fil. è Coll. Magd. Sup. Ord. Commens. *Commercium ad Mare Australe*. Carm. Heroico.

In the 1717 collection, the author’s name is given at the end of the poem as

*Joh. Alleyn, Reynoldi Alleyn de Barbadoes*  
Arm. fil. Coll. Mag. Sup. Ord. Commens.

- (2) in line 35, 1713 prints “Indiginae” [*sic*], which 1717 corrects to “Indigenae”.
- (3) in line 49, 1717 prints “cubilia” with an upper-case “C”.
- (4) in line 81, 1717 prints a colon instead of a semicolon after “Muneribus certat”.
- (5) in line 93, 1713 prints a full stop at the end of the line, which 1717 corrects to a comma.

The text below has been lightly modernized:

- (1) all ligatures, including the ampersand, have been expanded.
- (2) the long “s” has been replaced with its usual modern form.
- (3) spacing before punctuation marks has been reduced in accordance with modern practice.

Spelling, capitalization, and the use of italics remain as in the original. Line numbers have been added.

Dum victos *Gallorum* animos, finitaeque Belli  
Taedia, et *Europam* composta *Pace* silentem  
Laeta Theatra sonant: *Britonas* generosa reliquit

Ambitio, secura Quies oblita laborum Corda habet; et se jam faustam satis <i>Anglia</i> credit.	5
Non sic <i>Harleio</i> visum. Vir providus audet Ulterius prodesse; in publica Commoda magni Prodigus Ingenii: Tacita <i>Ille</i> in mente repostas Res Patriae propere evolvens, perque omnia Acumen Indefessi Animi versans, nova Sceptra remotis Invenit in terris, aliumque ANNAE indicat Orbem.	10
Defunctae bello Naves, ignobilis Otî Probra diu veritae, obscuram sine laude Senectam Ducere non ultra metuunt; sed munere digno Ornatae, modo quae pacarant, aequora visent, Exaecturae Opibus, quos defendere, <i>Britannos</i> . Jamque mari insultat Classis, fluctusque superbos Spe plena agglomerans, fragrantia pone relinquit Littora <i>Brasiliae</i> ; vel divitis Ostia <i>Platae</i> Contendit petere; aut <i>Patagonas</i> visere gestit Prole Gigantea notos; vel praeterit aestum <i>Lemarii</i> , et flavae <i>Chiles</i> allabitur oris.	15 20
Apparent procul, et nudata cacumina Montes Attollunt moesti: ac veluti praedives Avarus Inculca squallet facie, miserabile corpus Horrida deformat Macies, et turpis Egestas Mendaci ore sedet; Tali Regio ista videtur Aspectu; non laeta Seges, non Herba virescens Triste solum vestit; non ridet fertilis Arbos, Non ipsum infelix Lolium; nuda omnia circum, Et tota est sterilis Tellus. Tamen intus abundat Vis larga Argenti, et rudis Auri pondera crescunt. Huc subeunt <i>Britones</i> , justaque cupidine lucri Ardentes, alacri terras clamore salutant.	25 30
Indigenae <i>Austerales</i> celsas accedere Puppes Littore prospiciunt, et vim prohibere parati Armis cuncta tenent: at cum venisse <i>Britannos</i> Fama refert, tanto perculsi nomine, saltant Horrendum; et positos jaculis, et corde feroci, Certatim coeunt, oculisque et mentibus hærent Affixis; Roseasque genas, formosaque lustrant Corpora, mirantes tanta dulcedine mistum	35 40

Terrorem, Bellique decus. Nunc sanguine tinctis  
*Hispano* gladiis dant Oscula; telaque palpant  
 Horrida; quasque modo trepidavit *Gallia* Cristas, 45  
 Attrectant blandi; per barbara pectora surgit  
 Laetitia; usque adeo juvat aspectasse *Britannos*.

Ast illi interea, quas sedes incolit Aurum,  
 Quam secreta sibi posuere cubilia Gazæ,  
 Quaerere festinant prompti: delectat euntes 50  
 Sub pedibus crepitans Tellus, et tinnula Gleba  
 Vicinas enarrat Opes; Stellata metallo  
 Saxa micant, tremuloque ardescit pulvere Campus.  
 Labitur exiguus juxta per devia rura  
 Rivulus, et ripas, quas flumine lambit, inaurat; 55  
 Laetus adit miles, propriori languidus aestu,  
 Dumque sitim sedat, vaga lympa sub ore bibentis  
 Flavescit, luditque Aurum subtile per undas.

Talibus exercet sese novus Advena curis,  
 Et rufam vel versat humum, aut rimatur arenas, 60  
 Aut subit effractos montes, curvasque fodinas;  
 Aut nudum spectat fossorem viscera terrae  
 Diripere, et venas investigare sequaces;  
 Aut, alio versus, liquidum fluitare metallum,  
 Fornacesque stupet Nummis fervere futuris. 65

Interea expediunt *Indi* pretiosa *Britannis*  
 Munera, Amicitiae pignus; Donumque paratur  
 Magnificum Victrici ANNAE: Quid Foemina fecit  
 Barbara Gens canit, atque incultis laudibus ANNAM,  
 Delicias *Boreae*, celebrans, Commercia jungi 70  
 Optat, et inde novos sibi surgere spondet Honores.  
 Jamque omnes reserantur Opes, magnisque superbi  
 Hospitibus populi, latebris expromere gaudent  
 Divitias, veteresque ultro tellure recludunt  
 Thesaurus: et jam detracta monilia collo, 75  
 Daedaleas Plumas, et vasti Ponderis Aurum,  
 Argentumque ingens cumulant, stipantque carinis.

Totos pande sinus *Thamesis*, laeto excipe fluctu  
 Quas tibi Primitias *Notus* affert, Orbis *Eoi*  
 Invidiam. Pro te nunc aemulus *Indus* uterque 80  
 Muneribus certat; tua, luxus quicquid ubique est,

Unda vehit; *Thamesique* superbum cedere *Gangem*  
 Moesta *Aurora* dolet. Seri gaudete Nepotes;  
 Immortalem aperit Thesaurum *Harleius*; et Austrum  
 Pandit inexhaustum. Vos vela tumentia, *Belgae*, 85  
 Contrahite: et tanto ne fastu, *Hispania*, jactes  
 Tecta superba *Limae*. *Britones* miracula *Chiles*  
 Narrabunt propriae, et spernent juga fulva *Potosi*.  
*Anglia* nunc, Armis positis, meliore Metallo  
 Vulnificum mutat Chalybem, crescitque vicissim 90  
 Ferro Auroque potens: duplici hoc Munimine tuta  
 Perpetuam aut celebret *Pacem*, æternosve Triumphos.  
 Tu quoque luxurians nativo Nectare Tellus,  
 Chara mihi Patria, exultes; Tu debita jungas  
 Gaudia; Te posthac supremo in limite Regni 95  
 Non distare querar; non terminus Ultimus ANNAE  
 Sceptri eris: *Angliacum* nunc ipsum respicis *Austrum*,  
 Teque Orbis mediam video, Imperique *Britanni*.

### The South Sea Trade

John Alleyn, trans. John T. Gilmore

(ll. 1–5)

While with the Peace agreed the glad theatres tell of the conquered souls of the Gauls, and the end of war's horrors and the calm of Europe, great-souled ambition departs from Britain, safe repose takes possession of hearts forgetful of their labors, and England now believes herself fortunate enough.

(ll. 6–11)

Not so it seemed to Harley. The far-seeing man dares to be of further use, prodigal of genius in the public good: he in his silent mind speedily considering far-off things for his country's good and reflecting upon all things with the cunning of his unwearied soul, he finds new sceptres in far off lands, and shows another world to Anna.

(ll. 12–22)

Ships which have done with war, long fearful of the shame of ignoble ease, no longer dread inglorious old age, but adorned with a worthy duty they will



behold the seas which they have now tamed, to increase exceedingly in wealth the Britons they have defended. And now the fleet leaps upon the sea, and joining the proud billows with a full hope, after it leaves the fragrant shores of Brazil either struggles to seek the harbor of the rich Plate, or strives to behold the Patagonians famous for their gigantic race, or passes Lemaire's strait, and glides towards the coast of golden Chile.

(ll. 23–34)

Far off appearing, sad mountains raise their barren tops: like some most wealthy miser who is filthy and unkempt, a horrid leanness deforms his wretched body, and shameful want sits on his lying face; just so that region seems: no glad harvest, no flourishing plants clothe the sad soil, no fertile tree smiles, not even wretched weeds; all around is bare and the whole earth is barren. Within, however, abounds a mighty store of silver, and pounds of raw gold grow. Here come the Britons burning with a just desire of gain and hail the land with cheerful shout.

(ll. 35–47)

The southern natives gaze out from the shore as the tall ships sail in, and stand firm, ready to meet force with force, but when it is reported that the Britons are coming, struck by so great a name, they dance in a frightful manner, and, putting aside their spears and their cruel natures, they eagerly approach, crowd round and stare and examine their rosy cheeks and handsome bodies, wondering at the frightfulness and distinction of warfare mingled with so much beauty. Now they kiss the swords stained with Spanish blood and caress their frightful weapons. The crests which lately caused Gaul to tremble they fondle with delight, joy swells within their savage breasts, so much it gladdens them to look upon the Britons.

(ll. 48–58)

But they, meanwhile, eagerly hasten to enquire where Gold is to be found, where he has placed the secret chambers of his treasury. As they walk, the crackling earth beneath their feet delights them, and the tinkling soil declares wealth to be nearby. The sparkling rocks flash with metal, and the fields burn with quivering dust. A little rivulet glides through the wandering countryside and gilds the banks washed by its flow. The happy soldier comes, wearied by a closer heat: while he quenches his thirst, the flowing water glitters beneath his face as he drinks, and gold-dust plays beneath the ripples.

(ll. 59–65)

With such concerns the new-come stranger busies himself, turns up the red earth, or searches through the sands, or climbs the broken mountains with their hollow pits, or watches the naked miner tear up the bowels of the earth and search its wandering veins, or, looking elsewhere, wonders at the flow of liquid metal, and furnaces which blaze with future coin.

(ll. 66–77)

Meanwhile the Indians bring to the Britons precious gifts, a pledge of friendship, and a magnificent present is prepared for conquering Anna. A savage race sings what a woman has done, and with their untutored praises celebrating Anna, darling of the North, Commerce chooses to be joined, promising herself new honors to arise from thence.

And now all their wealth is revealed to the mighty guests of a proud people, they rejoice to bring forth riches from their hiding-places and show ancient treasures to another world: and now necklaces taken from round their throats, Daedalean plumes, and gold of enormous weight, and much silver, they heap up and with them load the ships.

(ll. 78–92)

Spread wide your reaches, O Thames, receive the first-fruits the South Wind brings you on the joyful tide, the envy of the Eastern world. Zealous now for you both Indies contend in gifts; thine, whatever luxury, wherever it is, the sea brings; and the sad Dawn mourns that the proud Ganges yields to Thames. Rejoice, ye late-born grandsons: Harley opens an immortal treasury and spreads out an inexhaustible South. Furl your swelling sails, ye Dutch; and do not vaunt with such vainglory, Spain, the proud roofs of Lima. Britons shall tell the wonders of their own Chile and scorn the golden heights of Potosi. England now, having laid aside her arms, changes wounding steel for a better metal, and grows powerful by iron and by gold in turns: safe in this double rampart she shall celebrate perpetual peace, or everlasting triumphs.

(ll. 93–98)

Thou also, O land abounding in thy native nectar, Fatherland dear to me, rejoice; join in with gladness due; no more shall I complain you lie in the farthest reaches of the Kingdom, no more will you be the last point of Anna's rule: now you look upon a South which is itself English – I see you the middle of the world and of the British empire.

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## Lucianic Dialogues in Colonial Santo Domingo: The Historical Miscellany of Luis Joseph Peguero

*Dan-el Padilla Peralta*

Sometime in the early 1760s, as the Seven Years' War raged across multiple continents, Luis Joseph Peguero (d. 1792) began compiling a history of the Caribbean island of Hispaniola from 1492 to his times. A landholder in the valley of Baní on the Spanish-controlled side of the island, Peguero made regular trips to the city of Santo Domingo in order to consult the literary resources – early modern chronicles, narrative and natural histories, dramatic and epic poetry, light-hearted fictional dialogues – that nourished his fledgling text. Completed in long-hand draft by 1763, Peguero's two-volume *History of the Conquest of the Spanish Island of Santo Domingo, Compiled In 1762* (*Historia de la Conquista de la Isla Española de Santo Domingo, Trasumptada El Año de 1762*; hereafter *Historia*) has some charm and many oddities. Shuttling between paraphrase and word-by-word transcription of his authorities, Peguero's medley offers unique insight into the colonial and racial imaginaries that emerged in tandem with Hispaniola's fluctuating fortunes on the Caribbean and world stage. It is a precious and rare testimony to the frictions of life on Hispaniola at a time when the island's Francophone and Hispanophone halves were evolving in different yet complementary directions, with a plantation-centred cash crop economy on the western end and a ranching and animal-husbandry economy on the eastern. By the time Peguero appeared on the scene, both economies were profoundly dependent on the exploitation and brutalization of African and Afro-descendant slave labor.

About Peguero's precise location in and commercial commitments to these networks of profit and slaving, very little is known.<sup>1</sup> That he was an *hatero*

1 Antonio Sánchez Valverde, one of Peguero's *hatero* contemporaries, explicitly called for an increased reliance on slavery in Spanish Santo Domingo: Fernando A. Pérez Memén, "El indio y el negro en la visión de la Iglesia y el Estado en Santo Domingo (siglos XVI–XVIII)", *Revista de Historia de América* 143 (julio–diciembre 2010): 112–14; further on the economic and political background to this proposal, n. 56 below. The *hatero's* power over his workforce was functionally equivalent to that of a slaveholder; for the noun's semantics see José Ulises Rutinel Domínguez and Manuel Darío de León, *Diccionario histórico dominicano* (Santo Domingo: Editora Universitaria, 1986), 142. Baní's place in the wax, wane, and resurgence of the sugar-plantation economy: Raymundo González, "Tierras, campesinos y plantación.

(rancher) in Baní is not confirmed directly by the *Historia's* programmatic remarks, though these do make a point of playing up his attachment to the countryside. Having mentioned at the beginning of his first volume the desire to soothe the tedium of rustic solitude by writing (“para paliar el hastio que me causava la soledad del campo”), Peguero opens the second volume by claiming that his style was intended for “country folk who have no need of resounding terminology in the pursuit of exceeding beauty” (“yo escribo para jentes canpesinas, que no nesecitan de terminos retumbantes, al razonado de mucha pulcridad”) and directs grammar-obsessed pedants to the “Roman eloquence” of authors such as Cicero and Vergil.<sup>2</sup> But his education and means are apparent from these gestures, whose place in the long history of Greco-Roman and Renaissance *captationes benevolentiae* could be seen as giving the lie to his country-bumpkin persona.<sup>3</sup> Wealth furnished him with the resources to pursue rustic *otium*, and to style that pursuit according to the classicizing trope of the “georgic” life – with all its attendant mystifications.<sup>4</sup>

The internal evidence of the text and the few notices about his life that can be gleaned from other sources ground Peguero firmly in the region of Baní; otherwise, however, we are completely in the dark about his biography. Significantly for an author whose text cannot be extracted from the historical dynamics of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, it is impossible to ascertain precisely where Peguero himself fell on the region's racial and pigmentocratic spectrum, though he does at one point enumerate contemporaneous racial taxonomies only then to insist that in the Santo Domingo of his day only two human species existed: white and black.<sup>5</sup> It is possible, though by no means verifiable,

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San Cristóbal en el siglo XIX”, *CLÍO: Órgano de la Academia Dominicana de la Historia* 199 (enero–junio 2020): 61–90.

2 Luis Joseph Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista, de la Isla Española de Santo Domingo Trasumptada El Año de 1762*, ed. Pedro J. Santiago (Santo Domingo: Museo de las Casas Reales, 1975), I.10 for the first quotation; II. “Advertencia” for the second and third. Peguero's exemplars of Roman eloquence: “Marco Caton; Marco tulio; Virginio [*sic*]; Plinio; y Rutilio”. I quote Peguero without modernizing his spelling; all translations are mine.

3 For other examples of his impish sport with generic expectations see his “Escusa del Prologo”: Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, II.6. The rhetorical construction of Peguero's *rustiquez*: Ruth Hill, “Country Dumb’ Down in Santo Domingo: ‘Rustiquez’ in Peguero's *Historia de la Conquista de la Isla Española*”, *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos* 33, no. 1 (otoño 2008).

4 He writes in “his bucolic retreat in the Valley of Peravia” (“su eglógico retiro del Valle de Peravia”): thus Emilio Rodríguez Demorizi, *Poesía popular dominicana* (Ciudad Trujillo: Editorial La Nación, 1938), 16–17; the choice of the adjective *eglógico* faithfully and perhaps too credulously echoes Peguero's literary self-presentation. On classical and early modern pastoral's habit of mystifying slaver power and wealth see Matthew Leigh, “Vergil's Second *Eclogue* and the Class Struggle”, *Classical Philology* 111 (2016): 406–33.

5 Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, I.275; to be read with Hill, “Country Dumb”, 205–6.



that members of his family had first come to the valley of Baní among the waves of immigrants from the Canary Islands that were dispatched to repopulate the island.<sup>6</sup> Consequential for somewhat different reasons is the fact that his *Historia*, “the first book written in vernacular Dominican Spanish”, contains the earliest datable use of the substantive *dominicano* to refer to residents of the Spanish-speaking sector of Hispaniola. This “first” has not been lost on modern investigations into the evolving onomastics of Dominican identity.<sup>7</sup>

As if Peguero’s patchy biography itself did not raise enough questions, the afterlife of his manuscript is equally obscure. Either during Peguero’s later years or (more plausibly) sometime after his death, the manuscript wandered across the Atlantic to Madrid, before being acquired by the Biblioteca Nacional de España in 1876 and making its first print appearance in Julián Paz’s 1933 catalogue of BNE manuscripts from the Americas. In the decades since, Peguero’s *Historia* has remained mostly in hibernation. It was only with the scholarly introduction and edition of the text by Pedro J. Santiago in 1975 that the rancher from Baní began to attract more interest from historians of the eighteenth-century Black Atlantic. Santiago has speculated that Peguero’s manuscript left the island in the possession of an émigré from Santo Domingo either sometime after France secured possession over the entire island, or after the newly independent Republic of Haiti seized control of the Hispanophone sector following the latter’s liberation. Another, more pedestrian possibility is that the manuscript was sent across to the Atlantic (either by Peguero or by

6 This resettlement was a coordinated strategy with lasting implications for the Spanish-speaking portion of Hispaniola: Frank Moya Pons, *Historia colonial de Santo Domingo* (Santiago: Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, 1977), ch. 13, esp. pp. 287–88 on the foundation of Sabana de Baní; Antonio Gutiérrez Escudero, *Santo Domingo colonial: estudios históricos. Siglos XVI al XVIII* (Santo Domingo: Academia Dominicana de la Historia, 2007), 43 and 218. But some Pegueros were in the area of Baní prior to the Canarian resettlements: to the evidence cited by Santiago in Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, I.xxxiv–xxxv, add the details in Vetilio Manuel Valdés, “Orígenes de la Villa de Baní: Historia y Aportes,” *CLÍO: Órgano de la Academia Dominicana de la Historia* 198 (julio–diciembre 2019): 207–9; and the online stemmata of the Proyecto Genealógico Raíces de Quisqueya.

7 I quote from the introduction to the excerpted selection in *The Dominican Republic Reader*, eds. Eric Paul Roorda, Lauren H. Derby, and Raymundo González (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014), 42. *Dominicano*: see, e.g., Juan Daniel Balcácer, “Acerca del gentilicio de los dominicanos,” *Diario Libre*, August 9, 2012, <https://www.diariolibre.com/opinion/lecturas/acerca-del-gentilicio-de-los-dominicanos-MODL351094>. The term appears in a poem honoring “the valiant Dominicans who have proved themselves capable of defending their Spanish island” (“los valientes Dominicanos [que] an sabido defender su isla Española”: Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, I.267), quoted approvingly in Rodríguez Demorizi, *Poesía popular*, 15–16.

his literary executor) for printing.<sup>8</sup> In any case, the *Historia*'s artifactual mobility alone makes it an enticing candidate for intensive scrutiny; but the more compelling reason for analysis of its contents is its relevance to the study of classical reception in the colonial Caribbean. To date, engagements with Peguero's work have been minimal in Caribbean studies and non-existent in classical reception circles.<sup>9</sup> This chapter seeks to rectify that deficit.

While research into colonial Neo-Latin literature and into postcolonial encounters with ancient Greece has boomed in recent years,<sup>10</sup> texts such as Peguero's remain on the periphery of Latin American classical reception studies. Peguero has not had many fans even in the Dominican Republic, in no small part because of the withering dismissal of his writings by the historian of Dominican literature Max Henríquez Ureña – who was more inclined to favor the colony's burst of neoclassicizing Spanish poetry during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries than experiments in prose.<sup>11</sup> As corrective to Henríquez Ureña and in partial mend of a gap in Latin American reception

8 A concession was granted to Antonio Dávila de Coca y Landeche to print on the island in 1758, but the date of the printing press's first activity in Santo Domingo is unclear: see Max Henríquez Ureña, *Panorama histórico de la literatura dominicana* (Santo Domingo: Editorial Librería Dominicana, 1965), 74.

9 Peguero receives a passing mention in Raquel Chang-Rodríguez, "Colonial Voices of the Hispanic Caribbean", in *A History of Literature in the Caribbean*, Vol. 1: *Hispanic and Francophone Regions*, ed. A. James Arnold, Julio Rodríguez-Luis, and Michael Dash (Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 1994). Revealingly, both M. Henríquez Ureña, *Panorama*, 78–79, and Raimundo Lazo, *Historia de la literatura hispanoamericana* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1979), 331, give Peguero's first name incorrectly as Pedro.

10 Colonial Neo-Latin literature: Andrew Laird, *The Epic of America: An Introduction to Rafael Landívar and the Rusticatio Mexicana* (London: Duckworth, 2006). Surveys: Andrew Laird, "Latin America", in *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, ed. Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal, and Charles Fantazzi (Leiden: Brill, 2014): 1.821–32; and "Colonial Spanish America and Brazil", in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*, ed. Sarah Knight and Stefan Tilg (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 525–40. Ancient Greek and Greek texts in colonial and revolutionary Latin America: James K. Demetrius, *Greek Scholarship in Spain and Latin America* (Chicago: Argonaut, 1965); Ramiro González Delgado, "Panorama de la literatura griega en Iberoamérica", *Synthesis* 22 (2015). Post-independence adaptations of Greek tragedy: Kathryn Boshier, Fiona Macintosh, Justine McConnell, and Patrice Rankine, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Greek Drama in the Americas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

11 M. Henríquez Ureña, *Panorama*, 78–79, for the aspersions; 56–85 for coverage of the colony's literary outputs. Henríquez Ureña's cooptation by the dictatorship of Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930–1961), in which he parted ways with his more famous brother Pedro, and its bearing on his practice of intellectual history: Dan-el Padilla Peralta, "Athens and Sparta of the New World: The Classical Passions of Santo Domingo", in *Classicisms of the Black Atlantic*, ed. Ian Moyer, Adam Lecznar, and Heidi Morse (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020): 79–116.

studies, this chapter will focus on identifying and examining Peguero's retooling of one ancient Greek author: Lucian of Samosata (c. 125–180 CE). Encounters with Lucian in early modern Ibero-America have not been on the radar of classical scholarship nearly to the extent that they should. Much the same could of course be said for (the hegemonic politics attached to) the study of other ancient authors; this development is the direct consequence of a long-running tendency, the genesis and manifestations of which cannot detain us here, to marginalize and trivialize Spanish-language work in and with Greco-Roman classics.<sup>12</sup>

Keeping the chapter's sights trained on Peguero, I will examine how the transfer of Lucian to colonial Santo Domingo colluded in enabling those on the (rent-extractive) margins of global imperial violence to wield scripts of cultural domination for their own local ends, thus exemplifying the "omni-local" potencies of the Lucianic corpus's internal cultural logics.<sup>13</sup> I will also demonstrate why Peguero's experimentation with the format of Lucianic dialogue should interest students of indirect and mediated classical receptions. It is always enticing but somewhat precarious to line up a classical text and its early modern or modern adaptor(s) for one-to-one comparison; juxtaposition of this sort runs the risk not only of defining the receiving text as valuable only insofar as it mirrors or emulates its classical inspiration, and of thereby denigrating the value created in the gap between antiquity and its reception, but of obscuring the triangulation that is a necessary and unavoidable feature of any encounter with the classical past.<sup>14</sup> Are there more productive strategies for explicating acts of reception whose full decoding is conditional on identifying

12 Note, purely e.g., Matthew D. MacLeod, "Lucianic Studies since 1930", *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt* II 34, no. 2 (1994), 1397, parenthetically observing of J. Alsina's edition and Spanish translation of Lucian's works (1962–1966) that the text and apparatus "are worthless". The historical and ongoing marginalization of Spanish-language scholarship in classics and related fields: Dan-el Padilla Peralta, "Santo Domingo and the Politics of Classical Reception in the Caribbean", in *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory*, ed. Leigh Jenco, Murad Idris, and Megan Thomas (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019): 169–90; see also the introduction to this volume.

13 Nor is it out of step with the polyvocal and protean authorial persona of Lucian himself, on which see Daniel Richter, "Lives and Afterlives of Lucian of Samosata", *Arion* 13, no. 1 (Spring-Summer 2005): 75–100. Theorizing reception as "omni-local": Emily Greenwood, "Reception Studies: The Cultural Mobility of Classics", *Daedalus* 145, no. 2 (2016): 41–49.

14 See the cautionary remarks of Shelley Haley, "Self-Definition, Community and Resistance: Euripides' *Medea* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*", *Thamyris* 2, no. 2 (Autumn 1995): 177–78. Triangulation and the construction of the classical past: see James I. Porter, "What is 'Classical' About Classical Antiquity", in *Classical Pasts: The Classical Traditions of Greece and Rome*, ed. James I. Porter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006): 1–65.

their place in a triangle trade of intervening mediations? This is the question that we need to keep constantly in mind with Peguero's *Historia*.

## 1 Peguero's Literary Background and Cultural Contexts

Until a few years ago, the first library in Hispaniola whose contents were known was the property of a certain Inés de la Peña (d. 1521), which contained multiple copies of Petrarch's writings.<sup>15</sup> The recent re-discovery of the *Libro de los Epítomes*, the magnificently comprehensive inventory of the over 15,000 books that were collected by Christopher Columbus's son Hernando, has accelerated more intensive research into the early years of book history on the island – punctuated by Hernando's arrival in 1509 with 238 books.<sup>16</sup> During the first decades of the Conquest, many European printed books journeyed to colonial Santo Domingo and destinations farther west, not only as a result of Hernando's bibliomania but as companions to those clerics and laity who were plugged into the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Roman texts by then under way in Europe. This traffic in books had an important part to play in classical learning's weaponization, as part of the settler-colonialist violence that eviscerated indigenous communities throughout the Caribbean and the hemispheric mainland, and the intercontinental slave trade that funneled West Africans to misery. Even before this weaponization hit its full stride, it did not take long for this book learning to become entangled with slaver trafficking: Hernando Colón obtained a licence to transport an enslaved African for his 1508 trip to Santo Domingo.<sup>17</sup> While the itineraries of print media in the Spanish Empire are difficult to reconstruct in granular detail, evidence from the early 1500s confirms that editions of classical writers and of their most renowned Renaissance readers traveled in ship cargos to the Western Hemisphere. The distribution tilted heavily in the direction of Latin-language

15 Presentation and analysis of the library's inventory: Esteban Mira Caballos, *La Española, epicentro del Caribe en el siglo XVI* (Santo Domingo: Academia Dominicana de la Historia, 2010), 493–500.

16 Hernando's holdings in 1509: Edward Wilson-Lee, *The Catalogue of Shipwrecked Books: Young Columbus and the Quest for a Universal Library* (London: William Collins, 2018), 117–37. A critical edition of the *Libro* is forthcoming.

17 The weaponization of Greco-Roman learning: Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Walter Dignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Territoriality, and Colonization* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995). Hernando's acquisition of a licence to transport a slave, which he then sold to a Sevillian bookseller: Wilson-Lee, *Catalogue*, 135.

texts, with only a few Greek authors – mostly in Latin translation – tagging along for the ride.<sup>18</sup> Lucian of Samosata was in all likelihood one of them.<sup>19</sup>

The circulation of printed books on Hispaniola proceeded in step with the inauguration of European-style educational institutions, as well as the near-total eradication of indigenous forms of knowledge production. In the first few decades after Santo Domingo's foundation in 1496, the fusion of Catholic education and Greco-Roman erudition gained its most secure foothold with the founding of the Universidad Santo Tomás de Aquino in 1538.<sup>20</sup> However, first with the intensification of Spanish colonialism on the Central and South American mainland, and then with the escalation of hostilities on the open seas between the Spanish and other colonizer states, the pace of educational activity and the velocity of literary production on Hispaniola – ebbing already by the late 1500s – slackened significantly in the following century. With the exception of the playwright Tirso de Molina's (1584–1648) productive sojourn on the island and the epic airs of Bernardo de Valbuena (c. 1562–1627), most colonial literary production of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries took the form of incidental poetry of a moralizing and didactic tenor that wore its debts to Latin and Neo-Latin verse proudly. Given the interest in these poems, it is obvious that editions of Latin-language poetry remained accessible in Hispaniola for the versifying appetite, as was the case in other colonial Hispanophone contexts. Whether the same held true for Latin prose, or Greek texts of any stripe, is much harder to determine.

This state of affairs shifted markedly during the Ibero-American Enlightenment. Peguero's turn to history in the 1760s rode the waves of a regional "interest in recapitulating the past" that rippled through the literary production of the Hispanophone Caribbean and other areas of the Spanish Empire during the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Where Peguero's history departs from the efforts of some of his contemporaries is in the range of genres that he

18 The colonial Atlantic's traffic in ancient Greek and Roman authors: see, purely e.g., Ignacio Osorio Romero, *La enseñanza del latín a los indios* (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1990); Natalia Maillard Álvarez, "The Early Circulation of Classical Books in New Spain and Peru", in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, ed. Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 26–40.

19 Wilson-Lee, *Catalogue*, 122, noting Lucian's rising popularity "as the pattern of style for the likes of Erasmus and More's joint translation of Lucian and the appeal to Hernando's European contemporaries see n. 24.

20 The colony's intellectual and literary history: Pedro Henríquez Ureña, *La cultura y las letras coloniales en Santo Domingo* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, 1936); cf. Padilla Peralta, "Athens and Sparta", 92–100, for critique of this work's ideological foundations.

21 Quotation and discussion: Chang-Rodríguez, "Colonial Voices", 124–25.

thought appropriate for his historiographic craft, and in the variety of source materials he must have had to hand in order to hone and showcase his generic versatility. One of the core methodological commitments of his *Historia* is flagged by the verb *trasumptar*, whose past participial form is prominent in the manuscript's full title. With this verb, which encompasses both literal copying over by hand and the preparation of a compilation or abridgement, Peguero underlined the labor of summarizing and redacting the multitude of sources that he trawled for information on the island's history. For the scaffolding and the contents of Peguero's text, two sources in particular were repeatedly raided, often at length: the *General and Natural History of the Indies* (*Historia General y Natural de Las Indias*), penned by the Asturian nobleman and court-appointed historiographer Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (1478–1557); and the *General History of the Deeds of the Castilians on the Islands and Mainland of the Oceanic Sea* (*Historia General de los Hechos de los Castellanos en las Islas y Tierra-Firme de el Mar Oceano*), the handiwork of Philip II's chronicler Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas (1549–1626). These two were not privileged to the exclusion of other voices: approximately 70 authors in total are cited in the body of the *Historia*,<sup>22</sup> which layers ethnography and natural history – and the occasional experiment in light verse – onto the more or less annalistic serialization of insular events.

Common to many of Peguero's sources was a reliance on, and in some cases direct emulation of, the literatures of the Greco-Roman Mediterranean. This relationship of dependence and contestation unfolded along some predictable axes, especially when it came to strictly historiographic material. Oviedo and Herrera were deeply indebted to Roman historical and ethnographic writers, and the imprint of figures such as Livy and Pliny the Elder is detectable throughout Peguero's text. The "Advertencia al discrete lector" that opens the second volume<sup>23</sup> seems to suggest that Peguero had read several Roman writers, either in the original or in translation. Whatever the case may be, it is nonetheless obvious that much of his knowledge of classical writers was derived at secondhand. In the case of one classical writer, however, this secondhand filtration subtly alters and enhances the flavor of the *Historia*. To shine a brighter light on the motivations for Peguero's intermediated summons of Lucian, it will be necessary to comment briefly on the trajectory of Lucian's reception from early modern Europe to colonial Ibero-America.

22 The tally: Santiago in Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, I.xxxvi.

23 See n. 2 above.

## 2 Lucian's Ocean Crossing

Although Ciceronian dialogue had been a mainstay of European intellectual circles from the dawn of the Renaissance, leaving its stamp on the “Controversy of the Indies” that pitted Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda against Bartolomé de las Casas, by the 1600s the Lucianic brand had come into its own as a rubric for introducing and expounding intellectual controversies or scientific findings.<sup>24</sup> In the first rank of influential continental European adaptations of Lucianic dialogue was Bernard Le Bouvier de Fontenelle's *Nouveaux Dialogues des Morts* (1683–1684), a work that heralded its author's subsequent interventions in the Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns.<sup>25</sup> Bridging the courtly belletrism of the age of Louis XIV and the iconoclastic tendencies of the Enlightenment, Fontenelle's literary output over his long and acclaimed career accommodated a host of experiments with genre; but it was these *Dialogues* in conjunction with the similarly patterned *Entretiens sur la pluralité des mondes* that helped to elevate one species of Lucianic dialogue – witty exchanges between the illustrious dead – into a vehicle for the elaboration and amplification of the Quarrel's major debates. This vogue of recasting Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* persisted well into the eighteenth century. Although Voltaire's frolics with the dialogic format attained the most notice, English and German writers also capitalized on the form's appealing malleability.<sup>26</sup>

- 24 Sepúlveda's debts to Cicero and to the format of Ciceronian dialogue: see Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, *Bibliografía hispano-latina clásica. Códices – ediciones – comentarios – traducciones – críticos – imitaciones y reminiscencias. Influencia de cada uno de los clásicos latinos en la literatura española* (Madrid: Estampa de la Viuda e Hijos de M. Tello, 1902), 879–87. Expositions of the Controversy: David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003), 103–49; Andrew Laird, “Controversy of the Indies”, in *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*, ed. Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal, and Charles Fantazzi (Leiden: Brill, 2014): II.954–55. Lucian's *Nachleben* in Renaissance and Baroque Europe: Christopher Robinson, *Lucian and his Influence in Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1979), esp. 149–63 on *Dialogues of the Dead*; Anna Peterson, “Dialoguing with a Satirist: The Translations of Lucian by Desiderius Erasmus and Thomas More,” *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 27, no. 2 (June 2020): 171–92. Dialogue as literary practice in the early modern North Atlantic: David Marsh s.v. “Dialogue” in *The Classical Tradition*, ed. Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most, and Salvatore Settis (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 2010), 266–67.
- 25 Fontenelle's kinship with Lucian: Antonio Vives Coll, *Luciano de Samosata en España, 1500–1700* (Valladolid: Sever-Cuesta, 1959), 12, contending that the French writer outdoes his Greek model in venom but equals him “en ingenio y fuerza satírica”. Fontenelle's place in the popularization of Lucianic dialogues: Jesús Carruesco and Montserrat Reig, “Fontenelle i els *Nous Diàlegs dels Morts*: unes *Vides Paral·leles* a la manera de Lluicià”, in *Lucian of Samosata, Greek Writer and Roman Citizen*, ed. Francesca Mestre and Pilar Gómez (Barcelona: Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 2010), 49–62.
- 26 English writers: see Richter, “Lives and Afterlives”, 78–79 on Thomas Franklyn's 1780 effort.

However, what was arguably the most extensive and prolific takeover of Lucian to occur in Europe had been in progress for over two centuries in the Iberian Peninsula by the time Voltaire and his contemporaries took a crack at Lucianic pastiche. Beginning with Juan de Lucena's 1463 dialogue *Libro de vita beata*, Lucianic receptions first in Latin and then in Peninsular Spanish and Portuguese were remarkable for their intensity and variety.<sup>27</sup> Lucena's reliance on the format to set out criticisms of the social order and the keen interest of his dialogic protagonists with matters of vocabulary and style were precedent-setting; fastidiousness about correct speech would remain a staple of Hispanophone Lucianic dialogues in the following centuries, many of which would linger on the interrelationship of proper diction and (elite) self-fashioning. Roughly contemporaneous with the publication of Juan de Lucena's *Libro* is the appearance of the first two translations of Lucian into Castilian, based on a Latin translation of Lucian's *Dialogues of the Dead* 25 by the enterprising Sicilian humanist Giovanni Aurispa.<sup>28</sup> While the choice of *Dialogues of the Dead* 25 (with its all-star roster of Alexander the Great, Hannibal, and Scipio Africanus) may have initially owed more to a swelling Iberian obsession with Livy than to interest in Lucian, the introduction of Lucianic dialogue as a format for historical comparison and historiographical reflection was one spur for the inclusion of a selection from Lucian's writings in Francisco de Vergara's 1526 school edition of Greek texts.

It is in the final decades of the sixteenth century that the conversational Lucian comes into fullest view and clearest expression on the Spanish literary scene, with the sententious dialogues of Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola (1562–1631). Under Argensola's auspices, Lucian's status in Iberian circles as an authority on dialogic form and on appropriate techniques for writing history – a topic of fascination and dispute for continental European readers of the *Vera Historia* and the *De Historia Conscribenda* earlier in the century – was cemented. The extent of engagement with Lucian's writings deepened with the rise to literary prominence of Francisco de Quevedo (1580–1645) and Baltasar

27 See the indispensable catalogue of Iberian translators and imitators of Lucian in Vives Coll, *Luciano*. Painstaking survey of the major movers and shakers: Michael Zappala, *Lucian of Samosata in the Two Hesperias: An Essay in Literary and Cultural Translation* (Potomac: Scripta Humanistica, 1990).

28 Aurispa's life and accomplishments: John E. Sandys, *A History of Classical Scholarship* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908–1921), II.36–37. Further on the historical and cultural contexts of Aurispa's translation: David Cast, "Aurispa, Petrarch, and Lucian: An Aspect of Renaissance Translation", *Renaissance Quarterly* 27, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 157–73; David Marsh, *Lucian and the Latins: Humor and Humanism in the Early Renaissance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998), 1–41.



Gracián (1601–1658), both of whom enlisted Lucian as inspiration and interlocutor for their experiments in poetry and prose.<sup>29</sup> It is a tribute to Lucian's polyvocality and generic diversity that his reception in the generations after Quevedo and Gracián resists easy categorization: to some he was a moral philosopher, to others an arbiter of elegant style, to others the very paragon of the dream-traveler – and this is only to scratch the surface of Hispanophone and Lusophone adventures with the Syrian Greek. Unsurprisingly in light of Lucianic dialogue's deployment in the service of abrasive social critique, editions and adaptations of the author did from time to time draw the scrutiny of the Spanish Inquisition.<sup>30</sup> For the most part unobstructed, however, the various channels of engagement with the form of the Lucianic dialogue ultimately streamed into Peguero's immediate source for the three dialogues included in his *Historia*: the bilingual (French-Spanish) *Dialogues Nouveaux* of Francisco Sobrino, published in 1708.<sup>31</sup>

In some respects even more elusive than Peguero,<sup>32</sup> Sobrino installed himself at the court of Brussels as an expert on the Spanish language, and specifically Spanish language acquisition by non-native speakers, at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Specifying on its title page its commitment to explaining the “diverse forms of speaking that are specific to the Spanish language” (“diversas maneras de hablar, propias à la lengua Española” / “plusieurs façons de parler, propres à la langue Espagnole”), Sobrino's dialogues owed their columnar format and pedagogical vision to a language-acquisition curriculum with deep Greco-Roman roots.<sup>33</sup> But Sobrino's energetic adaptation of the

29 Quevedo's recourse to Lucian was regular and profound: see the notes in Francisco de Quevedo, *La Hora de Todos y la Fortuna con Seso*, ed. Lía Schwartz Lerner (Madrid: Castalia, 2009). Although Gracián namedropped him as a standard of emulation, his engagement with Lucian's writings is rather less pronounced: Zappala, *Lucian*, 206–208.

30 See the list of texts at Jesús Martínez de Bujanda, *El índice de libros prohibidos y expurgados de la Inquisición española (1551–1819)* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 2016), 752–53. The censorial dispositions of 1627 specified dialogues among the types of writings that required pre-approval prior to printing: Fermín de los Reyes Gómez, *El libro en España y América: legislación y censura (siglos XV–XVIII)*, Vol. 1 (Madrid: Arco/Libros, 2000), 316.

31 In what follows I lean on Nieves Arribas, “Los diálogos lucianescos de Francisco Sobrino”, *Enthymema* 2 (2010): 23–58.

32 For Sobrino's biography see the introduction to Francisco Sobrino and Félix A. de Alvarado, “*Diálogos Nuevos*” (1708) *de Francisco Sobrino* y “*Diálogo Decimoquinto*” (1718) *de Félix Antonio de Alvarado*, ed. Daniel M. Sáez Rivera (Valencia: Anexos de la Revista *LEMIR*, 2002).

33 Dialogue-based models of bilingual instruction in classical antiquity: note, e.g., *The Colloquia of the Hermeneumeta Pseudodositheana*, ed. Eleanor Dickey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012–2015), on whose relationship to Sobrino see the chart

dialogue format was not confined to the advancement of Spanish-language acquisition. For him, as for generations of his Spanish grammarian predecessors, the project of stabilizing and teaching language went hand in hand with the imperatives of empire; in fact, it was the metastasis into empire that had propelled Spanish grammar's evolution into a technology of domination.<sup>34</sup>

That the Spanish Empire was no longer in the front seat of proto-capitalist settler-colonialism by the time Sobrino sat down to compose his dialogues did not blunt the force of his ideological project. If anything, the scaling down of Spain's imperial potencies added fuel to the fire, as the three dialogues that Sobrino penned himself (without plagiarizing his sources) make unequivocally clear: the 11th, pairing Hernán Cortés and Montezuma; the 12th, pairing Christopher Columbus and Francis Drake; and the 13th, a virtuoso leap across time and space to pair Islam's founder Muhammed with the third-century Alexandrian Christian cleric and heretic Arius.<sup>35</sup> Far from being merely idiosyncratic or whimsical, each of these pairings activates discursive structures of immediate relevance to Sobrino and his contemporaries, as Nieves Arribas has carefully demonstrated. With the 11th, the rhetorical gymnastics of validating the extension of Spanish hegemony over the indigenous communities of the Americas move to the foreground. In the 12th, the build-up to and aftermath of the contests in naval supremacy that ultimately favored the British, thereby enabling their projection of power across the waters to counter Spanish territorial control over much of the Western Hemisphere, are voiced through the dialogue's two protagonists. And the 13th's juxtaposition of Muhammed and Arius would have resonated with an intended readership for whom the sectarian devastations of the Thirty Years' War and the menace posed by the Ottoman Empire were ever-present geopolitical concerns.

Under the sign of these cultural and confessional anxieties, the dialogues present the acquisition of language as a socialization in the arts of envisioning significant otherness (as realized through the personification of figures such as Montezuma and Muhammed), partly to propagate the script of Iberian

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at Arribas, *Diálogos*, 59. The reception paths of colloquy-form scholastic dialogues as compared to dialogues modeled on Cicero or Lucian: Tom Deneire, "School Colloquia", in *Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), II.1174–75; cf. Zappala, *Lucian*, 125–57, on Erasmus's *Colloquia* and *Luciani Dialogi*.

34 See Mignolo, *Darker Side*, 29–68, on the early Renaissance luminary Antonio de Nebrija.  
 35 The other dialogues were cannibalized from Cesar Oudin's *Dialogos muy apazibles* (1608), which themselves plagiarized from John Minsheu's *Pleasant and Delightfull Dialogues in Spanish and English* (1599): Arribas, "Diálogos lucianescos". Plagiarism not as bug but as feature of early modern European scholarship: Giovanna Ceserani, "Narrative, Interpretation, and Plagiarism in Mr. Robertson's 1778 *History of Ancient Greece*", *Journal of the History of Ideas* 66, no. 3 (July 2005).

identity and Spanish nationhood whose conceptual foundations are traceable to Sobrino's era. Following the lead of Arribas's deft application of Benedict Anderson to the interpretation of Sobrino's creations, we might say that the dialogues cohere around the production of an imaginary community, defined by its capacity to identify and classify the alterity that was *not* Spanish – variously encoded as indigenous American, English/British imperial, and non-Catholic. Such a reading does not by any means exhaust the signifying possibilities of the dialogues. All three share an appetite for counterfactual that nods gingerly towards alternative historical outcomes (and alternative biographical arcs<sup>36</sup>) if certain conditions of knowledge had been met: if, say, Montezuma and his community had been in possession of those arts and sciences through which the Spaniards carried out their subjection.

One aspect of Lucian's historical reception and contestation gave conceptual heft to Sobrino's decision to cast his dialogues from a Lucianic mold: the capacity of the conversational format to bring to life those alterities that centralizing state power and hegemonic violence kept throwing up for consignment to death, first in the form of the internally recolonized (for forcible conversion and/or expulsion and killing) non-Catholic residents of the peninsula during and after the *Reconquista*, then in the form of the externally colonized communities of the New World. But what did Sobrino's reader Luis Joseph Peguero intend by taking over the three fantastical dialogues into the body of his *Historia*? This question cannot be answered solely by reference to the contents of these dialogues. For Peguero's hemispheric contemporary Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo (1747–1795), Lucianic satire was well suited to the delivery of social commentary in the guise of stylistic criticism.<sup>37</sup> While the same general objective seems to guide Peguero, the full weight and programmatic slant of his dialogues become perceptible only when we take stock of the social commentary that is smuggled into Peguero's text through acts of deliberate occlusion.

36 Here Sobrino most closely approximates Fontenelle, for whom the dialogic form opened the door to a Plutarchan *Parallel Lives*-style mode of *synkrisis*; on this aspect of Fontenelle's project see Carruesco and Reig, "Fontenelle i els *Nous Diàlegs*", 59–61.

37 Studies of Espejo's *The New Lucian of Quito* (*El Nuevo Luciano de Quito*): Julie Greer Johnson, *Satire in Colonial Spanish America: Turning the New World Upside Down* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993), 67–71; Cristina Beatriz Fernández, "El Nuevo Luciano de Eugenio de Santa Cruz y Espejo. Un diálogo americano sobre el estilo oratorio y la educación", *Estudios de Teoría Literaria* 3, no. 5 (2014): 77–90.

### 3 Peguero's Dialogues with the Dead

The transplantation of Lucianic dialogue to the literature of the colonial Americas was likely preceded by the adaptation of Platonic models in works such as the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Diálogos de Amor*.<sup>38</sup> Whether or not Plato beat Lucian across the Atlantic (or arrived alongside him in one of Hernando Colón's chests), a Caribbean contemporary of the Inca may have authored the first work to feature some of the latter's satirical bite, even though concretely formal markers of Lucian's intertextual presence are absent: the Dominican-born Cristóbal de Llerena, whose theatrical *entremés* (outfitted with characters nattering on satirically about the state of affairs in the colony) was put on in Santo Domingo's Cathedral in 1588 and promptly earned its author the unfavorable regard of local authorities and a temporary exile to the Iberian Peninsula.<sup>39</sup> But for more unambiguous recourse to Lucianic dialogue as paradigm and cover for programs of critique, we have to spring ahead over a century and a half after Llerena's heyday, to Peguero's free handling of Sobrino's inventions in the *Historia*.

Having tried his hand at annalistic narrative, ethnographic survey, and natural history, Peguero marches into the dialogic realms for chapters 13–15 of the second volume, helping himself generously to Sobrino's improvisations but not without some alterations.<sup>40</sup> The first of these is the decision to ditch Sobrino's bilingual format, the columnar arrangement in French and Spanish being replaced with a monolingual presentation and supplemented by several orthographic and stylistic tweaks to bring the dialogues into closer alignment with the *campesino* language of the *Historia* as a whole.<sup>41</sup> Next, the dialogues are reordered. Sobrino had initiated his Lucianic sequence with Cortés and Montezuma before proceeding to Columbus and Drake and concluding with Arius and Muhammed; Peguero chose to open instead with the Columbus-Drake pairing, transition to Cortés and Montezuma, and linger on Arius and Muhammed before threading in one last exchange between Drake

38 On the Inca's investment in Neoplatonism and its dialogic forms as a strategy for "reconcil[ing] the New World with the Old", see Erika Valdivieso, "The Inca Garcilaso in Dialogue with Neo-Platonism", in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, ed. Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 74–85.

39 For the text of the *entremés* and relevant context, see "Cristóbal de Llerena y los orígenes del teatro en la América Española", *Revista de Filología Española* 8, no. 2 (abril–junio 1921), 121–30; on the work's reception: Chang-Rodríguez, "Colonial Voices", 119–20. Lucian's reception in New Spain: see the comments of Lazo, *Historia*, 176 on the writings of Sor Juana.

40 Cf. Hill, "Country Dumb", 210 n. 8 on Peguero's "quot[ing] extensively" from Sobrino.

41 Peguero's rustic pretensions: n. 3 above.

and Columbus. Peguero also made three significant alterations to the dialogues' contents. First, he introduced an extradiegetic spatial framework for the dialogues: the site of encounter between each set of protagonists is specified as the valley of the afterlife,<sup>42</sup> but with the twist that in two of the three dialogues one of the participants is fleeing the flames of hell (Drake, Montezuma) while his adversary is basking contentedly in deliverance (Columbus, Cortés); but for the third dialogue, this *mise-en-scène* is varied slightly, since it is presumed that as "semi-devil" and "baby devil" respectively both Muhammed and Arius are in hell. Second, each dialogue is expanded substantially to accommodate the presentation not only of the two protagonists, but of the bodies of scientific knowledge that will serve as sites of disputation and instruction.<sup>43</sup> Thus Columbus and Drake converse about geography and astronomy; Cortés and Montezuma wrangle over history, historiography, and the navigational arts; and Arius and Muhammed expound their respective departures from Christian truth. Finally, the dialogues, already in their very nature as conversations between the dead focused on muddling temporal distinctions, are outfitted with references (varying in explicitness) to Peguero's own life and times. The most barbed of these allusions is reserved for early in the Columbus-Drake exchange, when Drake responds to Columbus's insistence on being addressed deferentially by claiming that, when he had arrived to sack Santo Domingo in 1586, Columbus's palace had already been converted into a fecal dumping-ground by people living on the coast ("hecho oficina excrementia de la jente de Marina").<sup>44</sup> The fictional Drake conjures up a lapse into excrementalized decrepitude that in point of fact could not have been true in 1586 but that had likely materialized by Peguero's lifetime, when the state of colonial Santo Domingo's monuments was a subject for despondent mourning among his contemporaries.

The inclusion of a face-off between Christopher Columbus and Francis Drake was overdetermined by Peguero's interest in the economic and cultural vicissitudes of Hispaniola after the momentum of Spanish colonization had shifted to Central and South America. By the early 1700s, Drake's capture of Santo Domingo was recognized as a turning-point not only in the greater North Atlantic tug-of-war between England and Spain, but in the local fate of Hispaniola itself. Its vulnerability to pirate attacks exposed by Drake's assault, the island fell into decline – or so histories sympathetic to the project of Spanish

42 Cf. Goldwyn in this volume on katabatic necropolitics and mock epics in the early U.S. Republic.

43 Some of Peguero's sources for this material can be identified, others not: see Santiago in Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, I.xlvi n. 51.

44 Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, II.150.

Empire, among them Peguero's narrative sources and Peguero himself, subsequently asserted.<sup>45</sup> Yet the real point of no return came with the decision in 1605 to depopulate the island's northern regions so as to stop contraband commerce and to reduce the costs of protecting the colony from maritime incursions. Peguero does not mince words in expressing his antagonism towards the English, who were the major beneficiaries of the wobbling of Spanish power in the Greater Antilles; nor is he favorable towards the French, who directly benefited from the island's partial depopulation in the 1600s.<sup>46</sup> These antagonisms are rooted in Peguero's more sweeping anxieties about the state of the Spanish Americas in his lifetime, the religious and confessional striations of which we will examine in a moment.

For now, I want briefly to comment on the opening of the exchange between Cortés and Montezuma in order to tease out this dialogue's lively play with Greco-Roman antiquity, and to flag blindspots in the vision not just of these reanimated figures but of their authorial puppeteer. With introduction and preliminaries out of the way, the conversation opens as follows, hewing closely to Sobrino's original:

[C.] 'Ustedes señores Americanos, eran bien groseros quando tenian a los Españoles por hombres baxados de la Esfera del fuego, por que teniamos Artillerias y los Navios teniades por Pajaros que volavan sobre las Aguas del Mar'. [M.] 'Señor Cortes, lo Concedo; pero dígame usted por su vida, si los Atenienses eran hombres de entendimiento?' [C.] 'Sin duda que lo heran ...' [M.] 'Y que dize usted de la Manera que se sirvió el troyano, o tirano Pisistrato para bolver a entrar en la Ciudad de Atenas, de donde le habian hechado? [...] y este Pueblo tan habil, y de tanto entendimiento

45 I qualify this "decline" emplotment because, as much as *criollo* settler-colonials later waxed indignantly about the island's fall from imperial grace, those maroon communities that benefited from the weakening of Spanish control over the island will have benefited greatly. This is perceptible already in the writings of Peguero and Sánchez Valverde, and the latter's criollismo: see Silvio Torres-Saillant, *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 110–111. The historiographic accent on decline becomes even more pronounced in C19th works; see Anne Eller, "'Awful Pirates' and 'Hordes of Jackals': Santo Domingo/the Dominican Republic in Nineteenth-Century Historiography", *Small Axe* 18, no. 2 (July 2014): 80–94.

46 He mourned the British capture of Havana in 1762, quoting poetry composed that year by "una discreta matrona", who may be the earliest attested female Cuban poet: Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, II.236–41; for a critical edition of these verses, see Miguel Carabias Orgaz, "Dolorosa métrica expresión del sitio y entrega de La Habana. Edición Crítica", *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* (2016): 91–115. The literary flourishes of Peguero's account of Havana's capture: Hill, "'Country Dumb'", 203–5.

se sometió a este tirano para complacer a Minerba que les habia hablado en estos terminos?’

[Cortés: You Americans, you were blockheads when you thought the Spaniards were men descended from the sphere of fire because we had artillery; when you thought our ships were birds that flew over the waters of the sea.

Montezuma: Mr. Cortés, I concede the point; but tell me on your life, were the Athenians men of wisdom?

Cortés: No doubt that they were ...

Montezuma: And what do you have to say about the way in which the Trojan, or rather tyrant Pisistratus secured his re-entry into the city of Athens, from which he had been kicked out? ... and this people, so clever and of such wisdom, submitted to the tyrant so as to comply with Minerva who had spoken to them in those terms?]

Startled by Montezuma's recapitulation of Herodotus 1.60.2–5, Cortés asks how he had learned of this episode in the history of Athens. After his fall from power, Montezuma replies, he had had plenty of time to read histories, and to familiarize himself with the histories of Europe. The ensuing conversation will confirm that the former leader of the Aztecs is well versed not just in Greek but in Roman history; at the same time, it hammers home the proposition that knowledge alone, whether of history or of those military crafts by which the conquest of Central America was realized, would never have empowered Montezuma sufficiently to fight off the Spanish onslaught.

Several features of the dialogue's opening and progression are relevant to this chapter's project of tracking Hispanophone classical reception as an experiment in continuous intermediation. Whereas for Sobrino this dialogue, with its image of a Montezuma engaged in teaching himself how to overcome the shock of encounter with the European Other, operated to displace the confounding and unanticipated novelty of the New World,<sup>47</sup> for Peguero the exchange was muscled towards verifying the latent potency of classical learning as a tool for internalizing a world-order in which indigenous Americans capitulated not only to the physical but to the epistemic violence of the conquest. The evocation of Montezuma's (fictional) avidity for learning Greek and Roman history thus advertises a fantasy of the Spanish colonial enterprise near and dear to Peguero's heart: that indigenous communities would hunger so much to be taught the arts by which they had been dominated that they might

47 Cf. the analysis of Arribas, "Diálogos lucianescos", 45–46.

in time potentially outdo (some of) the carriers of those arts.<sup>48</sup> This riff on the theme of “tell me the story of how I conquered you”, abundantly paralleled elsewhere in the literary productions of colonial Latin America, dramatizes the intellectual consent of the subjected to their subjection, in the process sidestepping a more direct and wrenching confrontation with the sheer magnitude of the losses that this subjection entailed.<sup>49</sup> Concurrently, the dialogue also vindicates in ironizing fashion the projects of “textual imperialism” by which the confrontation of colonizer and colonized came to be commemorated as a face-off between different epistemic formations, resolved ultimately in favor of European ways of knowing.<sup>50</sup>

One might (and should) proceed in another direction from Peguero himself and interpret his decision to inhabit the generic form of Lucianic dialogue as sowing the seeds for the deconstruction of this epistemic fantasy. To see where such a deconstruction might find fertile ground, it will be convenient at this point to turn to Peguero’s own proffered reasons for including these dialogues in the *Historia*. Not one to mask his authorial designs, Peguero supplies a hermeneutic key that is worth quoting at length:

Notará el curioso estos tres Capítulos pasados, tres conversaciones hechas como digreccion fuera del asumpto de la historia y no lo es; por que abiendose quedado en serradas en la historia general de las indias algunas particularidades dignas de eterna Memoria, por la pequeñas de volumen en el primer tomo, nos hallamos presisado a sacar del otro Mundo subterraneo al Sr. Almirante Dn. Christoval Colon, y al francisco Drak que se las preguntase; y lo mismo del Reyno Mexicano, y Perulano, a Dn. Hernan Cortes, y a motezuma para colocarlas en este segundo tomo y a Arrio y a Mahoma por lo que dire.

Es constante que la nuestra America se fundó y pobló con castellanos viejos a puño serrado, esto es, jentes nobles de creo en Dios, y guardo su ley, y asi fue toda la America Cristianos, a maja martillo, (como dice

48 Cf. the remarks of Julián Garcés, Dominican bishop of Tlaxcala, in his *De Habilitate et Capacitate Gentium* (1537) that indigenous students outclassed *nostri qui se eius rei studio dedidere* (“those of ours who have devoted themselves to its study”): Laird, “Latin America”, 823; and Laird in this volume on Nahua Latinists.

49 I quote here the title of José Rabasa, *Tell Me The Story of How I Conquered You: Elsewheres and Ethnocide in the Colonial Mesoamerican World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011). For the lexicon and conceptual framework of “dramatizing consent” to subjection I rely on Bonnie Honig, *Democracy and the Foreigner* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

50 Cf. the historiographic attachment to Atahualpa’s encounter with the Spaniards at Cajamarca in 1532: Patricia Seed, “‘Failing to Marvel’: Atahualpa’s Encounter with the Word”, *Latin American Research Review* 26, no. 1 (1991): 7–32.



la vulgata) y lo semos [sic] por la infinita bondad de Dios hasta el presente, y lo seremos hasta la fin del Mundo, por la Misma, pero con el corriente de los siglos se han introducido en algunas partes pequeñas de la America, las Naciones inglesas, francesas, olandesas, y otras, infestas de las endiabladas zectas Calvinistas luteranas Anabattistas, hugonotes etc, quienes por solo esta razón son nuestros Capitales henemigos, y estos se introducen en nuestras tierras amigablemente por razón del despendio de sus Mercancias, encubriendo con capa de christianos sus mal seguidas doctrinas ...

[The curious reader will note these three previous chapters [as] three conversations made as digressions beyond the matter of the history, but that is not the case; because, with some particulars worthy of eternal memory having been sidelined in the general history of the Indies on account of the small size of the first tome, we found it necessary to bring out from the other subterranean world the Admiral Christopher Columbus, and Francis Drake to ask him about these [particulars]; and the same concerning the Mexican kingdom, and the Peruvian, Hernán Cortés and Montezuma, in order to assign these [particulars] a place in this second tome; and as for Arius and Muhammed, for reasons that I will state.

It is a fact that our America was founded and peopled with old Castilians with might and main; that is to say, noble people of faith in God, and who adhered to his law; and that thus all of America became Christian by the thwack of the hammer (as the common people say), and we are Christians through the infinite mercy of God until the present, and we will be Christians until the end of the world through the same. But with the passage of the centuries, in some parts of the Americas, the English, French, Dutch, and other nations have appeared – infested with those accursed sects: Calvinists, Lutherans, Anabaptists, Huguenots, etc. who for this reason alone are our chief enemies, and they introduce themselves in our lands on the friendly pretext of selling merchandise, concealing under the cover of Christianity their poorly guided doctrines ...]

In the end, it is the presence of these heresies in the Americas that inspired Peguero to chase after the ghosts of Arius and Muhammed with the third dialogue. The resuscitation of these historical figures as embodiments of arch-heresy clears space for the *Historia*'s author to show off his Counter-Reformation bona fides. Not content with bemoaning the advent of non-Catholic settler colonialism in the Americas, Peguero then prophesies that the coupling of

Catholicism with classical learning will prevail in the end, having already prevailed with the aid of the sword in the earlier stages of the conquest:

Por que asi como es mas apresiabile la Gramatica de Prisciano; la Poesia latina la de Virgilio, y Griega la de Omero; Filosofia la de Aristoteles; Mathematicas las de Euclides; Cosmografia la de Tholomeo; Medicina, la de Hipocrates, asi es la mas digna, y superior Sta. Sagrada verdadera Ciencia es la Theologia que ensenó Jesuchristo Nuestro Sr. (como dize Sn. Pablo) por que en esta se hallan los tesoros ricos de la ciencia, y sabiduría de Dios. Con esta dorada fuerte e invencible espada de Nuestra iglesia Catholica, se han aruynado, y hechado por tierra mil llares de herejes, y hecharan mientras duran; por que nuestra Sta. Madre iglesia Catolica Apostolica Romana, a pesar de los hereges Reynara hasta la fin del Mundo, con fuertes hijos legitimos que la defiendan con las letras, y las Armas ... Mil gracias dan a Dios los Americanos, de que su Conquista fuese por medio de Cristianos.

[But in the same way that [when it comes to] Grammar that of Priscian is more worthy of respect; in Latin poetry, that of Vergil, and in Greek, that of Homer; in philosophy, that of Aristotle; in mathematics, that of Euclid; in cosmography, that of Ptolemy; in medicine, that of Hippocrates – so too is the more worthy and superior [as] the holy sacred true science the theology that Jesus Christ our Lord (as St. Paul says) taught, because in it one finds the rich treasures of the science and wisdom of God. With this gilded, strong, and invincible sword of our Catholic church, myriads of heretics have been ruined and overthrown, and will be overthrown as long as they last: because our holy mother Roman Catholic church, in spite of the heretics, will reign until the end of the world, with strong legitimate sons to defend it with letters and arms ... The Americans give a thousand thanks to God that their conquest was by means of Christians.<sup>51]</sup>

The veer from the comic spirit of Lucianic dialogue is as emphatic as it is deadly serious. No surprise, then, that Peguero's editor Pedro Santiago credits the dialogues with the primary purpose of extolling the Catholic faith as unimpeachable and Christian learning as invincible.<sup>52</sup> The alterity recreated through the dialogic form gives way to the tendentious revanchism of a Catholic *criollo*, intent on glorifying the unique right of Spanish Catholics to keep the Americas

<sup>51</sup> Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, II.181.

<sup>52</sup> Santiago in Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, I.xlvi–vii.

under their thumb through the activation of Arius and Muhammed, and (with their invocation) the robust rhetorical complex of justifications for the enslavement and killing of heretics that dominated Euro-American theological discourse during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>53</sup> With the clinching remark that Americans themselves (by which Peguero means indigenous communities) were grateful to God for the circumstances of their subjection by the Spanish, Peguero takes matters one step further and fully embraces hortatory illocution.

In the spirit of renegade reading, we might also query Peguero's hermeneutic key to the dialogues not only for what it discloses in spite of itself – those fears that cluster around the margins of occlusion and omission – but for what it actively suppresses. To be sure, Peguero gives voice to adversaries whose humanity he is at least grudgingly willing to concede: adversaries who are named in the historical record and therefore available to him as interlocutors. There is, however, one glaring silence, conspicuous in light of the webs of economic activity that spread over Peguero's Baní to bind Spanish Santo Domingo to French Saint Domingue: racial slavery. The African slave receives no space for self-representation or articulation in the dialogues. Although there were fewer slaves in Spanish-speaking Hispaniola than in its French counterpart, the numbers were at the very least in the five figures.<sup>54</sup> Peguero himself was aware of the long-running dependence of colonial Santo Domingo on enslaved Africans; earlier in the *Historia*, he had even mentioned the collaboration of escaped slaves with indigenous communities in the series of revolts that had convulsed the island during the 1500s.<sup>55</sup> Why were the enslaved not brought into the Lucianic fold? One (necessarily speculative) answer is that Peguero's screed against the confessional and multicultural diversity of the Americas – no longer Spain's exclusive imperial playground, despite his triumphalist protestations – was fired up not by the presence of his named antagonists but by the presence of unnamed slaves, in particular those whose descendants were flourishing in maroon communities on the Spanish-speaking side of the island at the time that Peguero first put pen

53 Concentrating mainly on the Iberian protagonists and with an useful synopsis of the rhetoric's emergence and evolution: Pérez Memén, "El indio y el negro"; cf. Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man*, for its application to the subjection and genocide of indigenous New World communities.

54 Gutiérrez Escudero, *Santo Domingo colonial*, 6–7, citing Antonio Sánchez Valverde.

55 See Peguero, *Historia de la Conquista*, 1.196–212; cf. his poetic ruminations on the ruins of the sugar-processing sites – which had fallen into disuse following the waves of pestilential disease that had carried off their enslaved African and indigenous workforces – at 1.221–22, to be read with González, "Tierras, campesinos, y plantación", 63–64.

to paper.<sup>56</sup> While we might not know from Peguero's own direct report where he fell on the island's racial-pigmentocratic spectrum, his occlusion of the island's flourishing maroon presence speaks volumes about his self-identification.

Recent archaeological finds have substantially advanced our knowledge of these maroon communities, which sprung to life after the uprisings of the 1500s on the island and were successful in maintaining the cultural traditions and religious practices that their previously enslaved members had brought with them from central Africa to Hispaniola.<sup>57</sup> Because these maroon communities chose the island's mountainous highlands for their strongholds and repeatedly frustrated militarized attempts to return them to captivity, ecclesiastical and colonial authorities resorted to less belligerent overtures in the 1600s. Neither bellicose nor pacific approaches yielded results for the colony's *criollo* administrators; some of these communities even saw their numbers swell during the 1700s as slaves escaping from French Saint Domingue made their way to them. The movement of fugitives across the island incentivized the formation of Spanish fugitive-catching outfits,<sup>58</sup> one more index of the extent to which the social and economic systems of the two sides of Hispaniola were becoming ever more enmeshed during Peguero's lifetime. But these outfits were not successful at clearing the maroon settlements in the mountains, an outcome that would not have been in the fugitive-catchers' financial interest in any case. Through a combination of luck and ingenuity, these settlements outlasted Peguero himself. Their forcible incorporation into the Catholic and Eurocentric fabric of the Dominican nation-state was realized only a century and a half later, during the first US military occupation of Hispaniola (1916–1924).<sup>59</sup>

56 The fullest account of the maroon insurrections and the communities that arose in their wake is Carlos Esteban Deive, *Los guerrilleros negros: esclavos fugitivos y cimarrones en Santo Domingo* (Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 1989); see especially 157–79 on the state of affairs at the time of Peguero's writing. *Cimarronaje's* cultural legacies: Milagros Ricourt, *The Dominican Racial Imaginary: Surveying the Landscape of Race and Nation in Hispaniola* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 71–102.

57 The archaeological evidence, integrated with scattered C17th and C18th literary testimonies: Jane Landers, "The Central African Presence in Spanish Maroon Communities", in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora*, ed. Linda M. Heywood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002): 227–42.

58 Landers, "The Central African Presence", 237–38. Other attempts to lure or coerce free and fugitive Africans into the colony's economic structures foundered: on the Código Negro of 1784 see Amadeo Julián, "Políticas de Control Social, Económico, y Político sobre los Negros Libres," *CLÍO: Órgano de la Academia Dominicana de la Historia* 196 (julio–diciembre 2018): 77–116.

59 The U.S. occupation's racist targeting of Afro-descendant settlements in the Dominican mountains and borderlands: Lorgia García-Peña, *The Borders of Dominicanidad: Race, Nation, and Archives of Contradiction* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 58–92.

Why were these settlements and their rich cultural variety shut out from the *Historia*'s experiments with genre? We have now reached one of the darker corridors of Peguero's reception practice: a Lucianic dialogue of the dead that, in its refusal to confront the vibrancy of African and Afro-descendant communities, reveals the discursive limits of the tradition that had passed through Sobrino on its way to Peguero. If, at first blush, this recovery of the limits of Peguero's dance with Lucian seems straightforward, the implications are anything but. Peguero's veiling of a cornerstone presence on the island alerts us to the possibility that the concept of independent and largely self-sustaining Afro-Caribbean communities *might simply not be legible* to the Euro-classically minded reader. Even if it is a stretch to say, given the present state of our evidence, that Peguero acted with intent and calculation to mask the maroon presence on the island in the *Historia*, what seems unquestionable is that he situated himself within a received tradition that afforded him both flexibility and incentive to do so. On this reading, the hemispheric and indeed global range of the *Historia*'s rhetorical ballistics diverts attention from a local reality that Peguero found too disquieting to mention.

#### 4 Conclusions

There is far more to Peguero's mediated turn to Lucianic dialogue than what meets the eye, or what Peguero himself is willing to expound directly. The *Historia* invites us to pursue a recovery of alternative and co-existing intellectual genealogies and pathways that is as attentive to silence as it is to presence. One could adopt a narrowly literary method in response to this invitation, by (for example) locating not only solemn Plato but irreverent Lucian in contemporary Latin American novels that harness the commodious variety of philosophizing dialogue.<sup>60</sup> But the position advanced in this chapter is more expansive. What I am ultimately suggesting is that an eighteenth-century encounter with the specter of Lucian in a Caribbean island valley is metonymic of an entire register of reception in the colonial Black Atlantic.<sup>61</sup> The bricolage of Peguero's classicizing text, most apparent in the fragmenting of his narrative history into dialogic counter-history, steers his reader simultaneously to the chest-puffing

60 Probing not only to the Platonic but the Lucianic intertexts of Antón Arrufat's *La Noche del Aguafiestas*: Gustavo Herrera Díaz, "Eros y memoria en *La Noche del Aguafiestas*, de Antón Arrufat", *Universidad de La Habana* 282: 129–37.

61 Cf. the essays in Ian Moyer, Adam Lecznar, and Heidi Morse, eds., *Classicisms of the Black Atlantic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

vanity of Hispanophone colonial empire; the prospect – however remote – that this vanity might prove to be empire's undoing; and the urgency with which a performance of local reception could apply itself diligently and ruthlessly to the project of racial and ethnic erasure.<sup>62</sup>

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# Classical Learning and Indigenous Legacies in Sixteenth-Century Mexico

Andrew Laird

Martín Cortés, the son of Hernán Cortés by his indigenous mistress and interpreter, La Malinche, was arrested in 1566 for suspected conspiracy against Philip II of Spain. As a character in Carlos Fuentes's historical novel, *El naranjo*, 'The Orange Tree' (1993), Martín recounts how he angered the judge by his interjection of 'Etcetera' in response to the charges against him. He then explains that he had been taught Latin expressions like this by his mother: a new convert to Christianity, she understood that the Spaniards had a language for religion which was different from that used in everyday life.<sup>1</sup> Some native Mexicans were inclined to such an understanding by missionaries who made them aware of Latin and, by conveying a sense of its importance, used knowledge of the language to reinforce existing social divisions.<sup>2</sup>

Franciscan and Dominican friars began teaching elementary grammar to indigenous children soon after the Spanish conquest of 1521. Their pupils understood that Latin, though it had no native speakers, was not only the language of the church and the law, but also a vehicle of learning and knowledge. They also used its alphabet, which the Spaniards called 'Latin' or 'Roman', to transcribe Nahuatl and other Mesamerican tongues; and their study of classical grammarians like Priscian would have led them to conceive of the letter,

1 Carlos Fuentes, *El naranjo* (Madrid: Alfaguara 1993); Carlos Fuentes, *The Orange Tree* trans. Alfred Mac Adam (London: André Deutsch, 1994), 92.

2 The first printed dictionary from Spanish into the Mexican language, expressly compiled for those preaching to natives, included entries in Nahuatl for both 'Latin' and 'Latinity': Fray Alonso de Molina, *Aquí comeniença un vocabulario en la lengua castellana y mexicana*, Mexico: Juan Pablos, 1555, fol. 152v gives *latin tlatolli* for 'Latin, lengua latina', and two terms for 'Latinidad desta lengua' (i.e., pure Latin style): *latin tlatollotli*, (literally 'Latin word-ness') and *latin tlatoliztli* ('eloquence in Latin'). An earlier anonymous manuscript *Dictionarium* in the Newberry Library (Ayer MS 1478) also has *latin tlatolli* for 'Latin, lengua latina' and *latin tlatoliztli* for 'Latinidad desta lengua'. For an account of the general asymmetric 'relations of authority' between 'those who knew Latin and those who did not', see Françoise Waquet, *Latin or the Empire of a Sign* trans. John Howe (London: Verso, 2001), 230–1.

*littera*, as the most fundamental, atomic unit of language.<sup>3</sup> Latin was the portal to literacy and to literature, sacred letters as well as *litterae humaniores*, and thus appeared to have a special, divine quality.<sup>4</sup>

After explaining why some ‘Indians’, as they were called, received what would now be considered a classical education in Mexico, and outlining what they were taught (1), this chapter will discuss the primary objective of that education during the 1500s – the translation of texts from Latin into the Mexican language of Nahuatl (2), before considering ways in which the native scholars used their learning for their own ends (3). The final section (4) will then show how Greco-Roman literature may have helped those scholars to shape their own ideas of Mexico’s pre-Hispanic past.

## 1 The Education of Students from Native Elites

The Valley of Mexico was inhabited by several different peoples and language groups when the Spaniards first arrived in 1519. In the dominant city-states the language spoken was Nahuatl: Mexico-Tenochtitlan and the neighboring city of Tlatelolco, whose inhabitants were together known as the Mexica or ‘Aztecs’, had become the most powerful of the peoples now collectively known as Nahuas – though, like ancient Greeks, each group called itself after the city-state to which it belonged. The Mexica had forged and led the Triple Alliance in 1428 with the states of Texcoco and Tlacopan, through which they sought to control the area covered by Mexico City today. The so-called Aztec empire might best be seen as a mutable, symbolic confederation led by the Mexica, who had more control over regions beyond the Valley of Mexico than they did within it.<sup>5</sup> After the Spanish conquest, tensions remained between the

3 Fray Maturino Gilberti, *Grammatica Maturini* (Mexico City: Antonius Espinosa, 1559), fol. Vr: ‘There are four parts of grammar, namely the letter, such as *a, b, c*; the syllable, such as *ba, be*; the word, such as *Pater* and speech [*oratio*] such as *Pater noster qui es in caelis*’ [my translation].

4 In a letter to Philip II of Spain, the native rulers of Azcapotzalco wrote: *praedecessores ... nudi et corporis et animae dotibus, inter quas primas habent uirtutes ac litterae, quas profecto ne per somnium quidem nouere*, ‘our ancestors ... were bare of endowments for body and soul, amongst which the virtues and letters hold first place’. [*Invictissimo Hispaniarum Regi ...* Seville, Archivo General de Indias, Legajo Mexico, 1842, (1561) fol. 1, ed. Andrew Laird, ‘Aztec Latin’, *Studi Umanistici Piceni* 31 (2011), 303.]

5 Pedro Carrasco, *The Tenochca Empire of Ancient Mexico: The Triple Alliance of Tenochtitlan, Tetzco, and Tlacopan*, (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999).

different Nahua principalities, some of which were governed by Christianized descendants of their original pre-Hispanic rulers.<sup>6</sup>

Missionaries needed indigenous interpreters to assist in the conversion of populations all over the Americas, who required some knowledge of Latin words and formulae for this purpose, although they did not need to be able to write or speak Latin *ex tempore*. But some Spanish officials and missionary friars shared the view that youths selected from indigenous elites should receive systematic instruction in Latin in order to gain a higher education. The establishment of a boarding school for the sons of converted Muslims in the reclaimed emirate of Granada and the teaching of Taíno youths on the Caribbean island of Hispaniola from the early 1500s show that the practice was not exceptional.<sup>7</sup> It was adopted because of a presupposition long held in early modern Europe that the objective of an advanced education – in which Latin always remained the language of instruction – was to prepare students to become princes or leaders. By this means the Spaniards could consolidate their control over a newly subjugated population by creating a trained class of native governors.

In New Spain (as colonial Mexico was known), a precedent was established after the last king of Michoacán – a region that lay two hundred miles to the west of Mexico City – had been executed by the rogue conquistador, Nuño de Guzmán. In 1535, the king's two young sons were taken to the new colonial capital by their uncle, who offered them as hostages to pledge the loyalty of the P'urépecha people. They both became page boys to the viceroy, Antonio de Mendoza, and they received an intensive tuition in Spanish and Latin in his palace.<sup>8</sup> On their return to Michoacán in 1538, the elder son, Tariácuri, became governor of the region, to be replaced on his death by his scholarly brother, Antonio de Huitziméngari. The viceroy's motive for providing these youths with intensive tuition had been to ensure that Spanish influence would be sustained as they governed their ancestral realm.

6 Charles Gibson, *The Aztecs Under Spanish Rule: A History of the Indians of the Valley of Mexico*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964); James Lockhart, *The Nahuas after the Conquest: A Social and Cultural History of the Indians of Central Mexico, Sixteenth through Eighteenth Centuries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

7 David Coleman, *Creating Christian Granada: Society and Religious Culture in an Old-World Frontier City, 1492–1600* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1–9, 113–43; José María Kobayashi, *La educación como conquista: empresa franciscana en México* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1974), 157–61.

8 Anon., *Relación de Michoacán*, ed. Moisés Franco Mendoza (Zamora: Gobierno del Estado de Michoacán, 2000); Angélica Jimena Afanador-Pujol, *The Relación de Michoacán (1539–1541) and the Politics of Representation in Colonial Mexico* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 2015), 17–108.

The political strategy worked, and the experiment was also a pedagogical success. A renowned professor of Civil Law at the Royal University of Mexico, Bartolomé Frías de Albornoz, supplied a glowing account of Antonio de Huitziméngari's capacities:

The present witness has sufficient foundation in the Latin, Greek and Hebrew languages to recognize who excels in them, and though [Huitziméngari] is well above average ability in them all, where Latin is concerned, know that the same Don Antonio is very proficient and can easily understand and read quite well any Latin poet or orator. As for the Greek he knows, there are not two better Hellenists in all of New Spain – though there are many who are regarded, or who regard themselves, as gifted at Greek – because this witness saw him, on one of many occasions, reading an Olynthiac speech of Demosthenes and pronouncing the tricolons very competently (*leer una olíntica de demostenes y de dezir los ternos muy diestramente*). He knows the elements of Hebrew, but is not as advanced in that as he is in Greek or Latin: in those languages and in literature he is more thoroughly versed than many who earn their keep from it.<sup>9</sup>

Doctor Frías de Albornoz's observation that New Spain boasted 'no two better Hellenists (*no ay dos griegos mejores*)' than Huitziméngari conveys that the only one who must have been Frías de Albornoz himself. The writer went on to specify the advantageous social consequences of Huitziméngari's schooling 'as a great example to the natives, who are inclined to imitate the virtues as well as the faults of their superiors'. A surviving bookseller's bill made out to Huitziméngari in 1559 indicates that the many contemporary testimonies to his learning were justified: Ptolemy's *Geography*, *Democrates*, a philosophical dialogue by the Spanish humanist Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, and Niccolò Perotti's *Cornu copiae* – the Renaissance humanist commentary on Martial which did double duty as a thesaurus of classical citations – were among the items on the invoice.<sup>10</sup>

9 Doctor Frías de Albornoz, 1553, *Probanza de Don Antonio, marzo 1554*: Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Patronato 60–2, ramo 3, transcribed in Francisco Miranda Godínez, *Don Vasco de Quiroga y su Colegio de San Nicolás* (Morelia: Fimax Publicistas, 1972), 150 [my translation].

10 *Poder de Franciso de Mendoza librero de México ... para cobranza 1562*, Archivo Municipal de Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Serie Pátzcuaro, expediente 35, folios 5r–5v, in *La vida michoacana en el siglo XVI. Catálogo de los documentos del siglo XVI del Archivo Histórico de la Ciudad de Pátzcuaro*, ed. Rodrigo Martínez Baracs and Lydia Espinosa Morales (Mexico

Missionary friars had already begun teaching Latin to children in the area around Mexico City in the 1520s, and in 1536, with the support of the viceroy and the Bishop of Mexico, the Franciscan order inaugurated the Imperial College of Santa Cruz in Tlatelolco, to prepare indigenous students for a career in public service, as magistrates and community leaders.<sup>11</sup> Among them was Antonio Valeriano, a nephew of Montezuma II, who ended up teaching in the college himself. His achievements were cited as evidence of the college's success by Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, the chair of rhetoric at the Royal University of Mexico:

Franciscanorum positum est monasterium, et in ipso Indorum collegium qui latine loqui et scribere docentur. Magistrum habent ejusdem nationis Antonium Valerianum nostris grammaticis nequaquam inferiorem, in legis christianae observatione satis doctum et ad eloquentiam avidissimum.<sup>12</sup>

[A Franciscan monastery has been founded and, within it, a college for the Indians who are taught to speak and write Latin. They have a teacher from their own people, Antonio Valeriano, in no way inferior to our own Latin instructors, learned in the observance of the Christian faith, and very devoted to cultivating eloquence.]

By 1573 Valeriano was appointed judge of Tenochtitlan, according to an entry for that year in the Codex Aubin.<sup>13</sup> A portrait of Valeriano on the same page (Fig. 7.1) reflects the way he operated between two worlds: Don Antonio sits on the straw throne of an Aztec lord or *tlatoani*, wearing a turquoise

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City: INAH, 1999), 63–4; Nora Jiménez, “‘Príncipe’ indígena y latino. Una compra de libros de Antonio Huitziméngari (1559)”, *Relaciones* [Zamora, Michoacán] 23, no. 91 (2002), 133–62.

11 Andrew Laird, “The teaching of Latin to the native nobility in Mexico in the mid-1500s: contexts, methods and results”, in *Learning Latin and Greek from Antiquity to the Present*, ed. Elizabeth Archibald, William Brockliss and Jonathan Gnoza (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 119–23; Esther Hernández and Pilar Máñez, eds., *El Colegio de Tlatelolco: Síntesis de historias, lenguas y culturas* (Mexico City: Editorial Grupo Destiempos, 2016).

12 Francisco Cervantes de Salazar, *Ad Ludovici Vivis Valentini exercitationem, aliquot Dialogi* (Mexico City: Ioannes Paulus, 1554), fol. 267r. Facsimile ed. Miguel León-Portilla, *México en 1554. Tres diálogos latinos* (Mexico: UNAM, 2001) [my translation].

13 Codex Aubin (British Museum) f. 59v; Charles E. Dibble, *Historia de la nación mexicana: reproducción a todo color del Códice de 1576 (Códice Aubin)* (Madrid: J. Porrúa Turanzas, 1963).

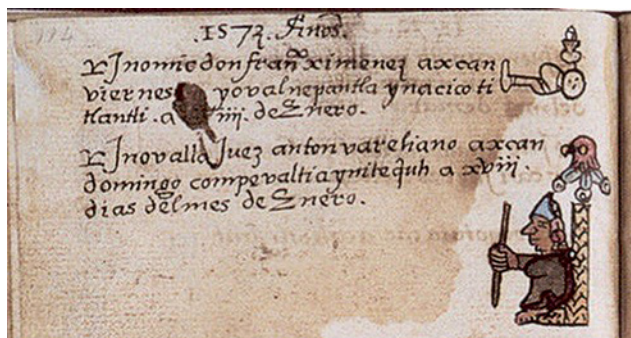


FIGURE 7.1 Antonio Valeriano depicted in the Codex Aubin,  
fol. 58v. (detail)  
BRITISH MUSEUM

*xihuitzolli*, the Mexican regal headdress, but he holds a Spanish staff of office. The glyph above the throne shows the three-pronged symbol for water, *atl*, below the image of a bird, *tototl* the combined root forms of those words, *a-* and *to-*, form an approximate phonography of the European name 'Anton'.

The College of Santa Cruz was not unlike those in Oxford and Cambridge which were being established at the same time. It was constructed next to the convent church of Santiago de Tlatelolco [Fig. 7.2]: lodgings and a dining hall were arranged around a cloister, initially built of adobe, and later in grey volcanic stone purloined from the adjacent ruins of the Great Temple of Tlatelolco. The Mexican students had more or less the same Latin curriculum as English boys did at St Paul's School in London: they would have studied Cato's *Distichs* and Aesop in Latin at elementary level, with Ovid's *Tristia* as a model for verse composition; they then progressed to reading Cicero, Sallust, Horace, and Virgil. That was not a coincidence: Erasmus had been invited by John Colet to devise the programme of study for St Paul's and the proposals in his *De ratione studii* of 1512 were recalled in the seminal treatise on education developed at Oxford in the 1520s by Juan Luis Vives in his *De tradendis disciplinis* (1531). Erasmus and Vives's methods for developing spoken and written fluency in Latin were being implemented all over Europe.<sup>14</sup>

14 Laird, "The teaching of Latin", 123–30.





FIGURE 7.2 The church of Santiago Tlatelolco and the College of Santa Cruz

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW LAIRD

The library available to the college was extensive: as well as religious works, there were grammars of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; editions of Caesar, Livy, Virgil, Juvenal, Pliny, Seneca, and Quintilian; and Latin translations of Aristotle, Plato, Plutarch, Josephus and Eusebius.<sup>15</sup> Many volumes from the convent at Tlatelolco which have ended up in the Sutro Mexicana Collection at San Francisco State University contain handwritten marginal notes, underlinings and glosses, some of which were by members of the college. Given the extent of Quintilian's influence in the Renaissance, the 1527 Savetier text of the *Institutio oratoria* which was kept at Tlatelolco contains annotations which are especially interesting to consider.<sup>16</sup> They are in several hands, but Edward George has observed that the comments of one scribe go beyond glossing

15 W. Michael Mathes, *The America's [sic] First Academic Library* (Sacramento: California State Library Foundation, 1985).

16 *M. Fabii Quintiliani Oratoriarum institutionum libri una cum nouendecim declamationibus subtilissimis, etc ad seuerae antiquitatis limam reconditis*. (Parisiis: per Nicolaum Sautetier, 1527).

individual words: they offer further instructions about eloquence for students, variant textual readings and even parallels from other classical authors including Plutarch and Euripides.<sup>17</sup> The scribe's annotations and emendations, however, were really copied from Pierre Gallande's later 1542 text which collated some previously published commentaries on Quintilian. Gallande's volume circulated in New Spain – and there was a copy in the nearby library of the convent of St Francis in Mexico City.<sup>18</sup> Even so, that does little to diminish the interest of the annotations or of George's investigation: the decanting of commentary into the college library books from editions held elsewhere shows the intensity of the collegians' engagement with the classical texts that were available to them.

It is worth emphasizing that there was no *discipline* of Classics as such during this period: in Mexico as in Europe, classical literature and ancient history were subsumed, where appropriate, into the programme of Grammar, Dialectic and Rhetoric, inherited from the Middle Ages, which was known as the *trivium*. This system was far more useful than many people now realize. The fact that grammar, dialectic and rhetoric were not so much subjects as practices, or 'ways of dealing with subjects', provided students with versatile, transferable skills.<sup>19</sup> Grammar, the study of how the language was structured and how it worked, was taught first, before students proceeded to dialectic, which consisted of both logic – studying how to define terms and make accurate statements – and 'disputation': the business of constructing arguments and detecting fallacies in the arguments of others.<sup>20</sup> Rhetoric followed as the third and final component: the art of elegant and persuasive speech or writing.<sup>21</sup>

The *trivium* thus offered a training in clear, critical thinking, and essay writing or speech-making which was designed to enable Indian students to

17 Edward V. George, "Humanist Traces in Early Colonial Mexico", *Litterae Humaniores del Renacimiento a la Ilustración: Homenaje al Profesor José María Estellés*, ed. Ferran Grau Codina, José María Maestre Maestre and Jordi Pérez Durà (Valencia: Universitat de València, 2009), 283–7.

18 *M. Fabii Quintiliani Oratoris eloquentissimi de Institutione Oratoria Libri XII singulari tum studio tum iudicio doctissimorum virorum ... argumentisque ... Petri Gallandii* (Paris: Michaelis Vascosani, 1542). The copy at the Convent of Saint Francis is described in Jesús Yhmoft Cabrera, *Catálogo de los impresos europeos del siglo XVI que custodia la Biblioteca Nacional* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1996) vol. 3, 6–7.

19 Dorothy L. Sayers, *The Lost Tools of Learning* (London: Methuen, 1948), 8.

20 W. Keith Percival, *Renaissance Grammar* (Warminster: Ashgate, 2004); Dov M. Gabbay and John Woods eds., *Handbook of the History of Logic: Volume 2 Medieval and Renaissance Logic* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2008).

21 Peter Mack, *A History of Renaissance Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford Warburg Studies, 2011).

become judicious and eloquent leaders. Their command of grammar, logic and rhetoric also meant that they could make precise translations from Latin into Nahuatl of the religious texts that were needed to help convert people to the Christian faith.

## 2 From Latin to Nahuatl

A number of handwritten Nahuatl books of Epistle and Gospel readings for specific days of worship survive from the 1500s, though only one has ever been edited.<sup>22</sup> These various lectionaries have yet to be compared systematically, but an initial inspection suggests that, despite orthographic differences, there is a remarkable degree of congruity between the texts they contain. It is likely that these translations had a common provenance in the College of Santa Cruz.<sup>23</sup> One example of a passage which was generally rendered in a uniform way was *Ecce agnus Dei*, 'Behold the Lamb of God', from John's Gospel 1:36:

Izcatqui in yichcatzin *Dios*.

[Here is God's sheep.]<sup>24</sup>

The Franciscans had come to use *Dios* – the loan word from Spanish – as the customary word for God in Nahuatl, to avoid any confusion or association with pre-Hispanic conceptions of the divine.<sup>25</sup> But [y]ichcatzin was the possessed, reverential form of the noun *ichcatl*, a word for cotton or wool which had come

22 Bernardino Biondelli, *Evangeliarium, epistolarium et lectionarium Aztecum sive Mexicanum ex antiquo codice Mexicano nuper reperto* (Milan: Bernardoni, 1858) is an edition of a lectionary from the early 1540s; other manuscript lectionaries in the US are listed in John F. Schwaller, *A Guide to Nahuatl Language Manuscripts held in United States Repositories* (Berkeley: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2001) and there are further examples in Mexican and European collections.

23 Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: Introductions and Indices* (ed.) Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1982), 83–4.

24 Biondelli, *Evangeliarium*, 241 [my translation].

25 Verónica Murillo Gallegos, "En náhuatl y en castellano: el dios cristiano en los discursos franciscanos de evangelización", *Estudios de cultura náhuatl* 41 (2010), 297–316; Georges Baudot, "Dieu et le Diable en langue nahuatl dans le Mexique du XVI<sup>ème</sup> siècle avant et après la conquête" in *Langues et cultures en Amérique espagnole coloniale*, ed. Marie Cécile Bénassy-Berling, Jean-Pierre Clément, Alain Milhou (Paris: Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle, 1993), 145–57.

to designate sheep, an animal introduced to Mexico by Europeans.<sup>26</sup> Doubtless the translators would have wondered and worried about equivalences such as this and converts absorbed and came to be familiar with many new expressions. Some are obvious choices, like *atequia* ‘water-sprinkle’, for baptize; others are less so: ‘resurrection’ was translated with the word *nezcaliliztli* which means ‘a reviving’ or ‘coming to one’s senses.’<sup>27</sup> As Nahuas absorbed these usages in the context of their conversion, their language came to change too.

There are, however, some clear discrepancies from the Latin New Testament. For example, in at least one lectionary produced in the 1540s, the opening verse of John’s Gospel:

In principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat Verbum

[In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.]

was translated:

In ipan peuhcayotl moyetzticatca in *tepiltzin* Dios, auh in yehuatzin itlan-tzinco catca in Dios, auh in yehuatzin in *ipiltzin* Dios catca.<sup>28</sup>

[In the beginning was the *Son* of God, and the *Son* was with God, and he was God.]

The idea of *Verbum* (the Word), which had long been the accepted Latin equivalent to *Logos* in the original Greek of John’s Gospel, disappeared, and was thus replaced with *tepiltzin Dios*, ‘God the son’, or literally ‘God the child.’<sup>29</sup> Yet there was an obvious equivalent for ‘word’ or ‘speech’ in Nahuatl – *tlatolli* – which

26 Frances Karttunen, *An Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1983), 92–3 (s.v. ICHCA-TL).

27 José de Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute* (1588) 4.9.2 argued that missionaries should not be concerned if equivalents for some terms could not be found in native languages. See also David Tavárez, “Naming the Trinity: From Ideologies of Translation to Dialectics of Reception in Colonial Nahua Texts, 1547–1771”, *Colonial Latin American Review* 9:1 (2000), 21–47.

28 Biondelli, *Evangelarium*, 376 (my emphases and translation) has *catcotl* for *catca*.

29 The Latin translation of John 1:1 had been debated since Christian antiquity: in his New Testament Erasmus corrected *verbum* to *sermo*, appealing to Tertullian and Cyprian: Marjorie O’Rourke Boyle, “A Conversational Opener: The Rhetorical Paradigm of John 1:1”, *A Companion to Rhetoric and Rhetorical Criticism*, ed. Walter Jost and Wendy Olmsted (Malden, MA: Wiley and Sons, 2008), 60–79.

was often used to translate *verbum* or *sermo* in other passages from scripture. *Tlatolli* must have had a value which was deemed inappropriate or insufficient for the sense of the *Incarnate* Word.<sup>30</sup> Native speakers of Nahuatl would have had a particular awareness of the misunderstandings that might arise from literal translations, and Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, a missionary and linguist who worked in the College of Santa Cruz over a period of forty years, explained that only the evangelical material prepared with the help of indigenous assistants could be free of heresy or defect.<sup>31</sup>

The Nahua students could never be credited as actual authors. Their translations and writings were either anonymous or attributed to individual Franciscans: in the latter case, though, the friars often named their Indian collaborators in the prefaces, sometimes acknowledging their labors at length. Evidence of classical learning can be seen in many of these works. A Nahua scholar called Hernando de Ribas helped Fray Juan de Gaona to compose his *Colloquios de la paz, y tranquilidad cristiana* which was produced as a manuscript in the 1540s and printed in 1582.<sup>32</sup> This text, which has never been translated or properly studied, was of a devotional nature rather than a philosophical work. Yet despite being written in Nahuatl for native readers, it contains several references to Greek and Roman figures: the Greek sages (*tlatatinime*) Plato, Pythagoras, Archytas, and Apollonius of Tyana are praised in Chapter 5, 'on the varied forms of knowledge in the soul'; Hannibal and Alexander provide cautionary *exempla* (Alexander for the impetuous killing of his friend Clytus); and the unworldliness and poverty of Stilpho, Diogenes the Cynic, Zeno, and Socrates are recalled in chapter 17 'on the loss of temporal things'.

Another manuscript of a dialogue was prepared in both Spanish and Nahuatl by four students, including Antonio Valeriano, under Bernardino de Sahagún's direction. The *Colloquios y Doctrina christiana* reconstructed the earliest conversations between the Aztec high priests (or 'satraps' as the Spaniards called them) and the first twelve Franciscan missionaries in Mexico.<sup>33</sup> The exchange contains a moving speech in which a Mexican 'priest of the idols' supposedly defended his gods. Declaring that he will reply to and contradict the words of the missionaries with two or three arguments, he sets about opposing the

30 Mark Christensen, *Nahua and Maya Catholicisms: Texts and Religion in Colonial Central Mexico and Yucatan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013) examines comparable examples.

31 Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: Introductions*, 83–4.

32 Fray Juan de Gaona, *Colloquios de la paz, y tranquilidad christiana, en lengua mexicana* (Mexico City: en casa de Pedro Ocharte, 1582).

33 Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Coloquios y doctrina cristiana* ed. Miguel León-Portilla (Mexico City: UNAM, 1986).

charge that the powers worshipped by his people are not gods: their ancestors told them no such thing and the gods live amidst flowers and greenery in Tlalocan, a realm unknown to mortals. His refutation then consists of three admonitions: it would be unwise to change laws of ancient standing; the gods might be provoked and the people rise up; it is advisable to proceed slowly and calmly. These appeals to what is practical, safe, and prudent correspond respectively to the *topoi* of *utile*, *tutum*, and *prudens* in European classical oratory.

Although this speech has long been revered by ethnohistorians as a unique and authentic vehicle of pre-Hispanic 'Aztec thought', it contains a formal refutation of the friars' argument in the style of a dialectical *disputatio*. In addition, its structure – an *exordium* (introduction), *partitio* (division into parts), *narratio* (statement of facts), *confirmatio* (proof of speaker's argument), and conclusion – is in perfect conformity with the kind of *dispositio* or arrangement recommended by Cicero and Quintilian:<sup>34</sup>

Arrangement [*Dispositio*] of speech delivered by 'Priest of the Idols'  
*Coloquios y doctrina christiana*, Chapter 7 [Paragraphs A–G in ms.]

*Exordium:*

Salutation, welcome and *captatio benevolentiae*

*Partitio:*

A. Speaker says two or three arguments will be advanced to counter what the Aztecs have heard

[– Countering Franciscans' earlier assertion (Chapter 3) that no one, however wise, can contradict Scripture]

*Narratio:*

B. Mexicans' recapitulation of the Franciscans' claim that their divinities are not gods; their opposition to it, invoking the authority of their ancestors and the beliefs they ordained.

34 The standard sources for *dispositio* in the Renaissance were Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1414a–1419b; [ps.-Cicero] *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 1.3.4–1.10; and Cicero, *De inventione* 1.9–109.

*Confirmatio:*

C. Attributes of the Mexican gods, and where they reside in Tlalocan.

D. Cities in which gods' worship was initiated: Tula, Tamoanchan, Teotihuacan, etc.

[– Countering Franciscans' emphasis on the importance of the city of Rome for the Christian faith]

*Refutatio:*

E. It would be unwise to change laws of ancient standing;

F. The gods might be provoked and the people might rise up if their traditional beliefs are rejected; it is advisable to proceed slowly and calmly.

[– Admonitions are *topoi*: *utile*, practicality; *tutum*, security; *prudens*, caution.]

*Conclusio:*

G. Affirmation of priests' resolve to continue worshipping their gods.

[– Implicit appeal to the classical commonplace of *honestum*, 'honor'.]

The clinching evidence of European artistry here is a reference to the Aztec speaker's opening *captatio benevolentiae*. While this was straightforwardly expressed in the Spanish text as '*captando la benevolencia*', the Nahuatl could only be an approximation:

qujmmotlapalhuj in teupixque, tlatlatlauhti, achi veyx ynjtlatol

[he greeted them, the divine guardians, he implored, his speech was a little long.]<sup>35</sup>

All this shows that the translators applied their knowledge of Latin dialectic and rhetoric directly to new compositions in Spanish and Nahuatl.

Renderings of short texts of classical origin into Nahuatl were a by-product of the energetic culture of translating Christian liturgy, doctrines and scripture. There are indications that there may have been a Mexican retelling of Apuleius's *Cupid and Psyche* – preserved in oral narratives recorded in the early twentieth century.<sup>36</sup> A collection of Aesop's fables in Nahuatl transmitted in two manuscripts appears to be the work of an indigenous scholar, perhaps

35 J. Jorge Klor de Alva, "The Aztec-Spanish Dialogues of 1524", *Alcheringa: Ethnopoetics* 4, no. 2 (1980), 116–17.

36 Andrew Laird, "The White Goddess in Mexico : Apuleius, Isis and the Virgin of Guadalupe in Latin, Spanish and Nahuatl sources" in *The Afterlife of Apuleius*, ed. Florence Bistagne, Carole Boidin and Raphaele Mouren (London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2021), 27–46.

Antonio Valeriano, not least because it is attested that he put Cato's *Distichs* into Nahuatl.<sup>37</sup> Scholars long assumed that these Aesop translations are loosely based on Bonus Accursius's Latin text, or (more plausibly) on Aldus Manutius's widely disseminated edition. But in fact the Nahuatl fables are a very precise rendering of the elaborate and rhetorical *Fabellae aesopicae* devised for school use by the German humanist Joachim Camerarius and published in 1538.<sup>38</sup> In the whole collection of 47 Nahuatl fables there are only two changes to Camerarius's original which come in the final tale, *Ce cahcatzactli*, 'Black man'. This is a version of *Aethiops*, a fable about a master who buys an African slave and tries to wash his natural color away. The original story ended rather unhappily:

aethiops autem afflictus cura, in morbum incidit.

[but the African was harmed by these efforts and fell ill.]<sup>39</sup>

That ending was altered in the Nahuatl translation by the addition of *omic*, 'he died', as the very last word of the narrative. The final fable is thus endowed with far more gravity: the master who abused his bought man now becomes responsible for his death.

The other change is the insertion of an extra moral. The first of the two morals

Yni çaçanilli techmachtia ca in quenami çeçeiacia iieliz in o ipan tlatat  
aiac huel ocçentlamantli ipan quicuepiliz.

[This fable teaches us that whatever nature a person is born with, nobody can change it into another.]

is based on that of the Latin original in Camerarius:

Significat fabula nullo pacto mutari ingenia & naturas, sed retinere insi-  
tas semper proprietates, & quasi personas sibi.

37 Fray Juan de Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* (Mexico City: UNAM 1975–1983) vol. 5, 176–7 (1615 orig. Book 15, chapter 43) praised Valeriano's translation of Cato.

38 Andrew Laird, "A Mirror for Mexican Princes: Reconsidering the context and Latin source for the Nahuatl translation of Aesop's Fables" in *Brief Forms in Medieval and Renaissance Hispanic Literature*, ed. Barry Taylor and Alejandro Coroleu (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2017), 132–67.

39 Joachim Camerarius, *Fabellae aesopicae plures quandringsentis, quædam prius etiam, multæ nunc primum editæ* (Tübingen: Ulr. Morhardi 1538), 115.



[The fable means that characters and natures can by no means be changed, but always keep their ingrained properties, just as people keep their attributes.]

But the second moral is added to endow the story about the black man with a new political charge:

Yni çaçanilli techmachtia ca niman amo huel oncan nemoa in altepetl itic in canì tepachoa çan no yehuanti teca mocaiahua tetlacuiculia, ihuan tetolinia.

[This fable teaches us: we do not live well in a town where the rulers are the ones to deceive, exploiting the others and harming them.]

It would be a mistake to assume that the native translators were commenting on the inequity of Spanish rule. The art of government was a major theme in Renaissance education: popular Latin treatises on the subject by Francesco Patrizi and Erasmus circulated in New Spain, and it was fashionable to present classical texts as mirrors for princes. Seven out of the last eleven Nahuatl fables (36–47) have stories or morals which are political in nature, concerned with the social order or with the art of government. That emphasis gives this Aesopian collection a unique character, pointing to its provenance in a college which was established to train leaders.<sup>40</sup>

### 3 Strategic Uses of Classical Learning by Native Latinists

Writing in the early 1540s, only a few years after the foundation of the College of Santa Cruz, a Franciscan chronicler Fray Toribio de Benavente, often known as ‘Motolinía’, praised the students’ progress. He explained that they could compose verse in hexameters and elegiacs and astonish their teachers by elaborating in Latin on their ‘speeches and disquisitions’ (*oraçiones y rrazonamientos*) for half an hour or more. The friar illustrated his observations with a memorable anecdote:

I don’t think that a funny occurrence in Mexico City should be kept quiet. A clergyman couldn’t believe that the Indians knew Christian teaching or even the *Pater noster* and the Creed. Even though other Spaniards told

<sup>40</sup> Laird, “A Mirror for Mexican Princes”, 149–55.

him this was so, he was still incredulous. At the time two students had gone out of the college, and the clergyman, thinking they were typical Indians, asked one if he knew the *Pater noster*. He said he did, and the clergyman made him say it, which he did correctly. Not content with that, he made him say the Creed and he did that too. But the clergyman challenged the Indian about a word he had used quite correctly. As the Indian insisted the word was right and the clergyman that it wasn't, the student had to prove it was correct by asking him, in Latin, *Reverende Pater, cuius casus est?* [Reverend Father, what case is the noun?]. Then the clergyman who had thought of confounding his neighbor ended up being confounded himself, because he did not know his grammar.<sup>41</sup>

Versions of this story were repeated and embellished in histories by other friars in the decades to follow to make the point that those who knew little Latin themselves feared that their errors would be detected by the Indians.<sup>42</sup> Nonetheless some objections to their education derived from simple prejudice about their capacities which never abated, even by the end of the sixteenth century. A speech made by a student in a short theatrical sketch, presented at the college in 1585, shows that the native scholars were alert to the debates about their position:

Ita res habet ad omnem veritatem, Reverende admodum Pater, quia a non paucis estimemur tanquam picae et psittaci qui laboriose docentur et cito obliviscuntur, et hoc non gratis, quia certe tenuissima habilitate dotati sumus, sed ob id egemus magno et continuo auxilio.

[It is entirely true, very Reverend Father, as many may compare us to magpies and parrots which are taught with much effort but forget swiftly. This

41 Motolinía, *Memoriales* (ms. c. 1540), ed. Nancy Joe Dyer (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1996), 343.

42 Compare Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta, *Historia eclesiástica indiana* (Mexico City: Porrúa 1993), 417 (orig. 1596, book 4, chapter 15); Torquemada, *Monarquía indiana* 5: 177. David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 229–34 discusses a 1545 letter to Emperor Charles V by Jerónimo López, in which the writer warns that the Indians' knowledge of Latin was leading them to discover that the Spaniards had once been pagans who rebelled against the Romans. Although López's alarmist comments are a singular objection to the natives' education, missionaries had already drawn such analogies themselves: Fray Julián Garcés's *De habilitate* (Rome, 1537), addressed to Pope Paul III, favourably compared the Indians of Mexico to the ancient Spaniards.

is not without good reason, as we do possess very insignificant capacities and so we are in constant need of a great deal of help.]<sup>43</sup>

The irony is obvious: even as the speaker appeared to endorse the opinions of those who held his fellow students in low esteem, he makes such opinions look absurd with his Latin eloquence and a learned evocation of Saint Augustine's commentary on Psalm 18 which distinguished between senseless bird calls and intelligent singing.<sup>44</sup>

The need for royal support for the College of Santa Cruz after the departure of its main patron, the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, to Lima in 1550 led to the commissioning of a herbal, apparently translated from Nahuatl into Latin for the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. The *Libellus de medicinalibus indorum herbis*, 'Booklet on the Indians' Medicinal Herbs', was completed in 1552 by a collegian named Juan Badiano, 'an Indian by race, a native of Xochimilco, and teacher in the same College'.<sup>45</sup> The title page, though, attributed the work to 'an Indian physician of the College of Santa Cruz, taught not by [medical] systems but instructed by experience alone' (*quidam Indus Collegii Sanct[a]e Crucis medicus composuit, nullis rationibus doctus, sed solis experimentis edoctus*) – a significant form of words which in fact recalled Isidore of Seville's definition of the 'Empirical School' of medicine.<sup>46</sup> The Indian physician who in his dedication of the work identified himself as 'Martín de la Cruz' may have also been known as Martín Momauhti, to whom Luis Velasco, Mendoza's successor as viceroy, had granted a licence in 1551, along with another Nahua from Tlatelolco, Antón Hernández, 'to heal and have the right to heal the

43 Fray Antonio de la Ciudad Real, *Relación breve y verdadera de algunas cosas de las muchas que sucedieron al padre fray Alonso Ponce*, vol. 1 (Madrid: Viuda de Calero, 1872), 22–3.

44 Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos I–L*, ed. E. Dekkers and J. Fraipont (Turnhout: Brepols 1956), 105: *Nam et meruli et psittaci et corui et picae et huiusmodi uolucres, saepe ab hominibus docentur sonare quod nesciunt. Scienter autem cantare, naturae hominis diuina uoluntate concessum est.* [In fact, blackbirds, parrots, ravens, magpies, and birds of this kind are often taught by men to make sounds they do not understand. Singing with understanding, on the other hand, is granted to human nature by divine will.]

45 Martín de la Cruz, *Libellus de Medicinalibus Indorum Herbis: Manuscrito azteca de 1552 según traducción latina de Juan Badiano* 2 vols. (Mexico City: FCE, 1991) contains facsimile, transcription, translation and valuable essay studies.

46 Cruz, *Libellus*, fol. 1r: *quidam Indus Collegii Sancte [sic] Crucis medicus composuit, nullis rationibus doctus, sed solis experimentis edoctus.* Compare Isidore, *Etymologies* 4.4: *Secunda Empirica, id est experientissima, inventa est ab Aesculapio, quae non indiciorum signis, sed solis constat experimentis.* Three schools [*haereses*] of medicine and their inventors are described: Apollo's Methodical School, Aesculapius's Empirical School and Hippocrates's Logical School.

native Indians of the diseases they have in this city of Mexico, in Santiago and other quarters'.<sup>47</sup>

Nothing of Martín's Nahuatl source text survives and none may ever have been put into writing, as some of the content may be based on oral dictation by the physician.<sup>48</sup> Many view the *Libellus* as a vehicle for knowledge specific to Mesoamerica, arguing that some of the European ailments mentioned by Badiano were analogues for infirmities known in Mexico.<sup>49</sup> Nahuatl words (without Latin inflections) are indeed used throughout to label plants which were not found in Europe, much in the way that Greek or Latin technical terms serve as loanwords in botanical textbooks today:

Somnum intermissum alliciunt et conciliant tlahçolpahtli, quae iuxta formicarum foveam nascitur, et cochizxihuitl cum hirundinis felle trita frontique illita. Tritae uero herbulae huihuitzyocochizxihuitl ex frondibus liquore expresso corpus ungi debet.<sup>50</sup>

[When sleep is interrupted it can be brought on and induced by *tlahzolpahtli*, which grows around anthills, and by *cochizxihuitl* when ground with the gall of a swallow and rubbed on the forehead. Furthermore, the whole body ought to be anointed with juice squeezed from the leaves of the little herb *huihuitzyocochizxihuitl*.]

47 The Nahuatl *Anales of San Juan Bautista*, fol. 51v, transcribed in Luis Reyes García, *¿Cómo te confundes? ¿Acaso no somos conquistados? Anales de Juan Bautista* (Mexico: Biblioteca Lorenzo Boturni, 2001), 299, recorded Don Martín Momauhti amongst a group of officials appointed in San Sebastián, named in the same list in the *Codex Osuna* (1565) as Martín de la Cruz. Further information is given in Carlos Viesca Treviño, 'Y Martín de la Cruz, autor del Códice de la Cruz Badiano, era un médico tlatelolca de carne y hueso', *Estudios de Cultura Nahuatl* 25 (1995), 479–98.

48 *Composuit* (fol. 1r quoted above) does not entail that Martín wrote his text: the classical structure of the *Libellus* was the work of Badiano the 'translator'. The account in Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Florentine Codex: Introductions*, 54, of how the *Historia general* and of other texts from native sources were redacted at Tepepulco and Tlatelolco in the same period may be pertinent.

49 Carlos Viesca Treviño, "El código de la Cruz-Badiano, primer ejemplo de una medicina mestiza", in *El mestizaje cultural y la medicina novohispana del siglo XVI*, ed. José Luis Fresquet Febrer and José M. López Piñero (Valencia: Universitat de València, 1995), 71–89; Bernardo Ortiz de Montellano, *Medicina, salud, y nutrición aztecas* (Mexico City: Siglo XXI, 1993), 37 on *abderetica mens* and *siriasis* (Cruz, *Libellus*, fols. 53v, 61r).

50 Cruz, *Libellus*, fol. 13v (my translation). Humanist Latin writers followed ancient practice of not inflecting names in Hebrew and other exotic languages: James N. Adams, *Social Variation and the Latin Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) 205–7. Carlos Viesca Treviño, "Las alteraciones del sueño en el *Libellus de medicinalibus indorum herbis*", *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 26 (1996), 147–61 treats the subject of this passage.

On the other hand, the hundred or so short entries, each prescribing botanical remedies for a given infirmity, are grouped into thirteen chapters which follow the *a capite ad calcem* or 'head to toe' convention which was common in post-Galenic medical texts including the popular *Medicina Plinii*.<sup>51</sup> In appearance the work resembles illustrated manuscripts of Dioscorides's *Materia medica*: on nearly every page there are colourful paintings, incorporating some Mexican pictographic conventions, of the medicinal plants described in the text.<sup>52</sup> In addition, Badiano also drew Greek pathological terms directly or indirectly from Pliny, whom he mentioned by name, perhaps to legitimize or confer dignity upon a tradition of knowledge from the New World – even if that tradition was modified as a result.<sup>53</sup>

The language of Martín de la Cruz's original dedication, as it was translated by Badiano, also fuses classical and Mexican elements:

Utinam librum *regis conspectu dignum* Indi faceremus, hic enim prorsus *indignissimus* est, qui veniat *ante conspectum tantae maiestatis*. Sed memineris nos *misellos pauperculos* Indos omnibus mortalibus inferiores esse, et ideo veniam nostra a natura nobis insita *parvitas et tenuitas* meretur.<sup>54</sup>

[If only we Indians could make a book *worthy of the king's glance*: this book is obviously *very unworthy* of coming before the *glance of such great majesty*. But you remember that we *poor little wretched little* Indians are inferior to all mortals, and the *smallness and insignificance* ingrained in us by nature therefore merits pardon.]

51 The *a capite ad calcem* convention began in the first century CE with Apollonius Mys and was generally followed by Dioscorides and Pseudo-Galen. The *Medicina Plinii*, an early 4th CE compilation of remedies from Pliny's *Natural History*, was popular in the middle ages and consulted in monastic infirmaries: Eva Matthews Sanford, 'Famous Latin Encyclopedias', *Classical Journal* 44 (1949), 463.

52 John M. Riddle, 'Dioscorides', in Paul Oskar Kristeller and F. Edward Kranz, *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum. Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin translations and commentaries: annotated lists and guides* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1984) vol. 4: 1–143 treats the diffusion of the *Materia medica*.

53 Cruz, *Libellus*, fol. 53r *micropsychia* (Pliny, *Natural History* 22.51); Pliny is mentioned at fol. 19v. Gregorio Hinojo Andrés, 'Influencias clásicas en el *Libellus de medicinalibus Indorum herbis*' in *Humanismo y pervivencia del mundo clásico. V: Homenaje al profesor Juan Gil*, ed. José María Maestre Maestre, Sandra Inés Ramos Maldonado, Manuel Antonio Díaz Gito, María Violeta Pérez Custodio, Bartolomé Pozuelo Calero, Antonio Serrano Cueto (Alcañiz and Madrid: CSIC and Instituto de Estudios Humanísticos, 2015), 709–37 examines classical sources in the *Libellus*.

54 Cruz, *Libellus*, fol. 1r–2v. (my translation and emphases).

Rhetorical repetition is not uncommon in Latin, but the pleonastic quality of Badiano's translation could be reproducing the effect of 'synonymic diffusion' which was common in Nahuatl discourse.<sup>55</sup> A particular Mexican convention of speaking might also account for the abject tone of the author's apology for the inferiority of his Indian race. The tone is sustained in the following sentence:

Nunc igitur hunc libellum, quem tuo nomini, vir magnificentissime, omni iure debeo nuncupare, precor ut eo animo de manu seruuli tui suscipias quo offertur, aut quod non mirabor eiicias quo meretur. Vale.

[So now this little book, which I must by every principle dedicate to you, most eminent sir, I beg you to receive in the spirit in which it is offered from the hand of your little servant or else – and I will not wonder at this – cast it away to whatever place it deserves. Farewell.]

The book had involved two years of scribal and fine artistic labor and the suggestion here that it should be simply discarded by its recipient is preposterous. But a Nahua speaker or writer's use of self-depreciatory expressions did not necessarily indicate submissiveness: it sometimes conveyed the very opposite and was recognized by Mexicans as a form of refined or lordly eloquence.<sup>56</sup> The college student's speech quoted above is comparable: it appeared to diminish the students' abilities whilst accomplishing quite the contrary. This effect here, together with the synonymic diffusion, suggest that the dedication of the *Libellus* looks more like a direct rendering of a lost Nahuatl original than any other part of the text.

The herbal was produced to secure royal patronage for the college – and alumni of the institution had already seen the advantage of using Latin in petitions to advance their own interests. Many of these supply detailed genealogical data and historical insights on pre-conquest history which are not contained elsewhere. The Latin letters by Nahua rulers show that they made adept use of their knowledge of Greco-Roman literature as well as the Latin

55 Ángel María Garibay, *Llave del Náhuatl* (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1940), 115 used the term 'difusión sinónimica'.

56 Frances Karttunen and James Lockhart, *The Art of Nahuatl Speech. The Bancroft Dialogues* (Los Angeles: UCLA Latin American Center Publications 1987), 22. Judith M. Maxwell and Craig A. Hanson, *Of the Manners of Speaking That the Old Ones Had: The Metaphors of Andrés de Olmos in the TULAL Manuscript* (Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1992), 20–1 note that 'constant potential for antonymic interpretation gives the Nahuatl author the power to say one thing but to mean another'.

language. While such knowledge, like the humanities in general, is nowadays associated only with education or leisure, it had an important role in influencing dominant groups throughout the early modern period. The indigenous scholars in New Spain were aware of this.

A letter to Charles V, written in 1552 by Antonio Cortés Totoquihuatzin, governor of Tlacopan, opens with an impressive example of the strategic deployment of classical learning:

Tam alta est tua Celsitudo, atque cesarea majestas, Cesar invictissime, ut ubique gentium non tam imperium longe lateque patens, quam illa tui animi Christianitas per omnium ora sonet in finesque orbis terrae divulgetur ...

[So lofty is your eminence and Caesarean majesty, most invincible Caesar, that among peoples everywhere the Christian quality of your soul, as well as your empire stretching far and wide, sounds on the lips of all and is proclaimed to the ends of the earth ...]<sup>57</sup>

The imperial title of ‘*Caesar*’ was customary but Totoquihuatzin plays on its Roman association: he later explains that ‘in ancient times’ the Indies of New Spain were divided into three parts – Mexico, Tlacopan, and Texcoco – recalling the way Julius Caesar described Gaul.<sup>58</sup> The allusion conveys the importance of the powerful Aztec Triple Alliance, in which his father as pre-Hispanic *tlatoani* or ‘lord’ of Tlacopan played a crucial part.

In this letter Totoquihutzin also repeatedly refers to another epithet of Charles V as *Invictus*: this too provides the basis for a more complex conceit:

Tuum studium eo semper tendere videtur quo gentes barbaras, ethnicos et demonum cultores, dei denique inimicos oppugnes ac e tenebris in lucem christianorum pellucidam in ipsum scilicet Justitiae Solem qui Christus omnium servator est educas, hosque victos pacifices, illustres, Christo tandem lucrifacias beneficium ...

57 Antonio Cortés Totoquihuatzin, *S.C.C. Majestati Antonio cortes Rector populi de tlacopan*, Tlacopan, December 1552, Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Patronato 184, 45, ed. and trans. Andrew Laird, “Nahua humanism and political identity”, in *Renaissanceforum* 10 (2016), 151, 157.

58 Cortés Totoquihuatzin, *S.C.C. Majestati*, fol. 3: *has indias antiquis in temporibus fuisse diuisas in tres partes nimirum mexicum, tlacubam, et tetcocum. Caesar, Bellum gallicum* 1.1: *Gallia est omnis diuisa in partes tres.*

[Your exertions seem always to be directed to fighting against barbarous peoples, pagans and worshippers of devils, in the end against God's enemies, then leading them from the darkness to the clear light possessed of Christians, indeed to that Sun of Justice which is Christ, savior of all, and to pacifying them once conquered, enlightening them, and at last winning them for Christ.]

Three years before this letter was written, Motolinía – the Franciscan guardian of Tlacopan – had connected the Christian *Sol Justitiae*, the ancient Roman *Sol Invictus* and the Aztec solar god, Tonatiuh. The conquistadors themselves had been called 'Sons of the Sun' by the defeated Nahuas.<sup>59</sup> The links between the sun and the conquest underscore the conjunction here of enlightenment (*illustres*), with *victos pacifices*, the Roman *topos* of pacification of the conquered. The flattery of this elaborate *exordium* was instrumental to the purpose of Antonio Cortés Totoquihuatzin's suit: to settle a bitter quarrel between Tlacopan and its *encomenderos* or colonial proprietors, the conquistador Juan Cano and his wife Isabel, daughter of Montezuma II.

A decade later, in a letter to Philip II, the rulers of Azcapotzalco quoted Virgil's adage *audentes fortuna iuvat* (*Aeneid* 10.284), 'fortune helps the bold', immediately before employing another classical *exemplum* in a deliberation about whether it was fitting for Indian subjects to petition the king:

Cuius rei argumento est Adrianus imperator, et is pro multis unus sufficit, qui transiens in itinere a muliere quadam rogatus ut eam audiret, cum respondisset sibi ocium non esse, audivit ab ipsa muliere: Noli ergo imperare; tum conversus aequissimo animo eam audivit.<sup>60</sup>

[The emperor Hadrian is proof of this principle and this one figure will serve for many. On a journey he was making he was asked by a certain woman to hear her: when he replied that he did not have time, he heard that same woman say, "In that case, do not be an emperor". At that he was moved to hear her very readily.]

59 Motolinía, *Memoriales*, 151; *Relación del origen de los indios que habitan en la Nueva España según sus historias* ("Codex Ramírez" 1500s), ed. Manuel Orozco y Berra (Mexico City: Editorial Leyenda), 1980, 59: 'The Indians knelt ... and adored the Spaniards as sons of the Sun, their god' (my translation). Cf. Louise M. Burkhart, "The Solar Christ in Nahuatl Doctrinal Texts of Early Colonial Mexico", *Ethnohistory* 35:3 (1988), 234–56.

60 Rulers of Azcapotzalco, *Invictissimo Hispaniarum Regi*, fol.1 [Laird, "Aztec Latin", 303].



The story comes from Cassius Dio, although it is not clear how the writers came to know of that source.<sup>61</sup> The anecdote is a fitting one for Philip of Spain because Hadrian was a Roman emperor born in Iberia.

There were practical reasons why such petitions were sometimes written in Latin rather than in Spanish or Nahuatl or other Amerindian languages. It was far easier to imitate and apply techniques in popular Latin manuals on how to write letters by using the same language.<sup>62</sup> Moreover, the writers had had little or no access to vernacular Castilian literature with which to embellish their petitions, and could best display their erudition by citing classical and Christian sources instead. If literacy was evidence of the Indians' capacity to be civilized, then Latinity was demonstration of an author's humanity in the fullest sense, through his acquaintance with humanist learning, the *studia humanitatis*. And, as indicated above, the educated Nahuas were aware that the manipulation of classical literature was part of the game of power.

#### 4 Greco-Roman Texts and the Transmission of Pre-Hispanic Legacies

The Nahua scholars at Tlatelolco were conscious of their status and their noble ancestry, but the world of their ancestors was something of which they had no personal experience or memory: born after the conquest, separated from their parents at an early age, fully Christianized and receiving an advanced European education, their worldview could hardly be more remote from that of the Aztecs before the Spanish conquest.<sup>63</sup> Their knowledge of Greco-Roman literature may have helped them to mediate and interpret aspects of the pre-Hispanic past. A telling example is the quintessentially Mexican emblem of an eagle devouring a snake, now on the national flag. Nahuatl

61 Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 69.6. Dio's lives of the emperors were included in *Vitae quarum scriptores hi C. Svetonius Tranquillus, Dion Cassius*, first published by Giovanni Battista Egnazio in Paris in 1544; many more copies of a second edition annotated by Erasmus of Rotterdam were printed by Johannes Frobenius in Basel in 1546. This is the most likely source for the episode, but others are considered in Andrew Laird, "Nahua humanism and Ethnohistory: Antonio Valeriano and a letter from the rulers of Azcapotzalco to Philip II, 1561," *Estudios de Cultura Náhuatl* 52 (2016), 37–8.

62 Erasmus, *De conscribendis epistolis*, ed. Jean-Claude Margolin, in *Opera Omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami, Ordinis Primi tomus secundus* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1971) [orig. Basel, 1522]; Juan Luis Vives, *De conscribendis epistolis*, ed. Charles Fantazzi (Leiden: Brill, 1999).

63 Richard C. Trexler, "From the Mouths of Babes: Christianization by Children in New Spain", *Church and Community 1200–1600. Studies in the History of Florence and New Spain* (Rome: Edizione di Storia e Letteratura, 1987) 549–74.

and Spanish chronicles explain that the Aztecs were instructed by their war god Huitzilopochtli to establish their city of Tenochtitlan when they found a rock by the lake of Mexico where an eagle was perched on a nopal cactus – a scene famously depicted on the Codex Mendoza, produced in the 1540s [fig. 7.3].<sup>64</sup>

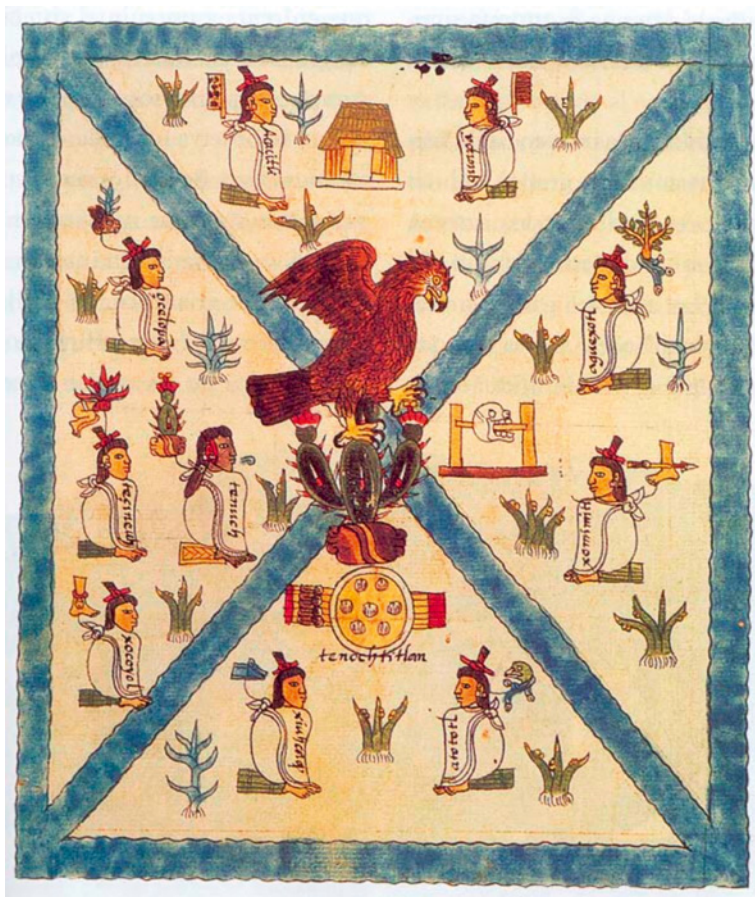


FIGURE 7.3 Front page of the Codex Mendoza c. 1546  
BODLEIAN LIBRARY, OXFORD

64 Hernando de Alvarado Tezozomoc, *Chronica Mexicayotl* (c. 1609), was transmitted by Chimalpahin, *Codex Chimalpahin*, ed. Arthur Anderson and Susan Schroeder (1977) vol. 1, 61; Fray Diego Durán, *Historia de las Indias de Nueva-España y [sic] Islas de Tierra Firme* (c. 1588) trans. Doris Heyden, *The History of the Indies of New Spain* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994), 44. The scene is on the front page of the Codex Mendoza, 1546 (Bodleian Library, Oxford).

But there is no snake in that painting or in any early written account of the legend. The snake did not appear until 1576 in the Codex Aubin, painted 55 years after the Spanish conquest.<sup>65</sup> Images of eagles struggling with snakes are legion in classical and Renaissance iconography and poetry, and their similarity to the Mexican emblem has been recognized.<sup>66</sup> The one particular literary source which best explains the snake creeping into this Aztec myth can perhaps be identified: Cicero's verses describing the omen witnessed by Marius of an eagle rising from a tree-trunk by the water's edge to tear apart a serpent, which was connected to the choice of the *aquila* as a symbol for the Roman standard.<sup>67</sup> The civic theme of Cicero's omen obviously parallels that of the sign for the foundation of Tenochtitlan: the late introduction of a snake in that context represents an attempt to dignify the Mexican sign with a kind of classical stature, or else simply to render that sign readable to Europeans.

Indian Latinists at the College of Santa Cruz collaborated with Fray Bernardino de Sahagún in his extensive researches into pre-Hispanic customs and beliefs for the twelve volumes of his *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*.<sup>68</sup> The collegians' contribution was recurrently acknowledged in this encyclopedic work, which was presented in a parallel Nahuatl-Spanish text accompanied with copious painted illustrations, presented in a manuscript now known as the Florentine Codex.<sup>69</sup> This work alone has meant that it is possible to discover far more about the life of the Aztecs than, say, the Anglo-Saxons. But even though the 'histories' overseen by Sahagún and other Franciscans were informed by an inquisitorial need for accuracy, there are

65 Codex Aubin, 1576 (British Museum), fol. 26v.

66 D'Arcy Wentworth Thomson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1895), 3, lists several accounts of eagles capturing snakes in classical literature; Rudolph Wittkower, "Eagle and Serpent. A Study in the Migration of Symbols", *Journal of the Warburg Institute* 2 (1939), 304–6 included Mexico in an iconographic survey from Mesopotamia to the modern world. Alfonso Reyes, "Apéndice sobre Virgilio y América" in *Obras completas* vol. 11 (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1960) 178–181 considered convergences between Virgil's *Aeneid* and the history of Mexico prompted by the simile comparing Tarchon's killing of Venulus to an eagle carrying off a snake in Virgil, *Aeneid* 11.751–8.

67 Cicero, *De divinatione* 1.47; David Wardle, *Cicero on Divination Book, 1* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 363–6. Pliny, *Natural History* 10.5.16 describes Marius's use of the eagle as the standard for Roman legions.

68 Miguel León-Portilla, *Bernardino de Sahagún: First Anthropologist* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 95–99, 183.

69 Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia General de las Cosas de Nueva España* (1577), Ms. Med. Palat. 219. Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Florence; ed. Ángel María Garibay 4 vols. (Mexico City: Porrúa, 1981); *Florentine Codex* trans. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble, 13 vols. (Santa Fe, New Mexico: School of American Research; Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1950–1982).



FIGURE 7.4  
Florentine Codex (c. 1577),  
book 1, preliminary folio, detail  
comparing Huitzilopochtli to  
Hercules and Tezcatlipoca to  
Jupiter. Laurentian Library,  
Florence

IMAGE PROVIDED BY THE  
WORLD DIGITAL LIBRARY

signs of classical interference. The alignments of individual Aztec and Roman gods in book 1 are well known (fig. 7.4), but the remarkable assumption in the same book that there were twelve greater Mexican divinities, six male and six female, when the Romans had twelve great gods of their own – also six male and six female – has long been overlooked.<sup>70</sup>

Evocations of Greece and Rome condition some of Sahagún's accounts of Mesoamerica's pre-history: Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent, who led his subjects from nomadism to civilization was compared to Aeneas, and his bountiful reign in which he issued new laws to his people in *Historia general* Book 3 recalls the age of Saturn – not least in the detail that cotton grew naturally in a range of colors, much as the ram envisaged in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue would provide wool of different hues.<sup>71</sup> The omens recounted in books 8 and 12 of the *Historia general* – by which the Aztecs supposedly foretold the destruction of their empire – are based on portents from Greco-Roman sources.<sup>72</sup> The first of them, a sword-shaped light in the sky, has an antecedent in Josephus's history

70 Andrew Laird, "Aztec and Roman Gods in Sixteenth Century Mexico: Strategic Uses of Classical Learning in Sahagún's *Historia General*", in *Altera Roma: Art and Empire from Mérida to Mexico* ed. John M.D. Pohl and Claire L. Lyons (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2016), 152–3. Robert Schilling, "Roman Gods", in *Roman and European Mythologies* ed. Yves Bonnefoy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 68–75 treats Romans' groupings of the chief *dii consentes*, in male-female pairings. Ennius, *Annales* fr. 62 enumerated twelve great gods, six female and six male: Otto Skutsch, *Studia Enniana* (London: University of London Athlone Press, 1968), 103–18.

71 Sahagún, *Florentine Codex Book 3. Origins of the Gods* trans. Arthur J.O. Anderson and Charles E. Dibble (Santa Fe: School of American Research 1952), 14 (chapter 3); Virgil, *Eclogues* 4:39, 4.42–45. The Nahuatl term *ichcatl* served for wool as well as cotton: cf. n. 26 above.

72 Felipe Fernández-Armesto, "Aztec Auguries and Memories of the Conquest of Mexico", *Renaissance Studies* 6 (1992), 287–305.

of the Jewish War. Comets, lightning flashes, and other signs recall the portents that marked Caesar's death in Virgil's *Georgics* and foretold the Roman civil war in Lucan.<sup>73</sup> Most striking of all is the account of the ominous nocturnal wailing which accompanied the departure of the demonic Snake-Woman goddess, Cihuacoatl, from Tenochtitlan, just before the Spanish conquest. That episode has an uncanny resemblance to the story relayed by Plutarch about the loud lamentation surrounding the death of great Pan.<sup>74</sup> The resemblance between the two narratives can be seen in terms of their parallel eschatological contexts: Cihuacoatl's farewell occurred immediately prior to the advent of Christianity in Mexico, and, according to Eusebius, Pan's death occurred at a correspondingly significant time – when Christ began to cast out demons during the principate of Tiberius, marking the abolition of human sacrifice among the gentiles.<sup>75</sup>

It is interesting that there are classical references or matrices even in texts which Nahuatl authors appear to have written for native audiences in the 1500s, including the poems known as the *Cantares mexicanos* or 'Songs in the Mexican Language'.<sup>76</sup> Early in the next century this trend became more marked, as indigenous chroniclers who wrote in Nahuatl as well as in Spanish would openly compare Mexico's ancient past to that of Greece and Rome, sometimes drawing very specific parallels and adorning their histories with quotations from classical authors.<sup>77</sup>

## 5 Conclusions

The objectives of the classical education received by Mexican students were above all practical – to equip them for positions of leadership in their towns and communities. All three components of the traditional *trivium* also found new, perhaps unexpected applications: the art of grammar helped to systematize Mesoamerican languages so that the missionaries could master them

73 Virgil, *Georgics* 1.466–88; Lucan, *Pharsalia* 1.524–695.

74 Sahagún, *Florentine Codex* book 8, chapters 1 and 6, book 12, chapter 1; Plutarch, *Deficiency of Oracles* 419c–e.

75 Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* 5.17; Laird, "Aztec and Roman Gods", 157–62.

76 *Cantares Mexicanos* ed. Miguel León-Portilla (Mexico City: UNAM, 2011), 41r, 59v, trans. John Bierhorst, *Cantares Mexicanos: Songs of the Aztecs* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 268–73, 338.

77 Andrew Laird, "Universal History and New Spain's Indian Past: Classical knowledge in Nahuatl chronicles", in *Antiquities and Classical Traditions in Latin America*, ed. Andrew Laird and Nicola Miller (Chichester: Wiley, 2018), 78–95.

with the help of their native students; and the principles of dialectic and classical rhetoric enabled those students not only to produce reliable translations of Latin texts but also to conceive and compose new discourses in their own languages.

The curriculum in Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco and other colleges placed emphasis on authors like Cicero, Seneca and Quintilian who provided guidance for writing letters or speeches, but the Latin writings of the Nahuas reveal that they also read Greco-Roman works with a broader compass – especially Virgil, Plutarch, Pliny, and Augustine. The natives' elegant petitions to the Spanish Crown are of literary interest as well as ethnohistorical value, but there were few texts like these, and they had very limited circulation during the 1500s. Translation *from* Latin was by far the most conspicuous and most valued outcome of the education at Tlatelolco, which in turn points to its most enduring consequence, and indeed to what might well be Mexico's greatest classical legacy: the use of the Roman alphabet to create a new literature in Nahuatl.<sup>78</sup>

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78 Ángel María Garibay, *Historia de la literatura náhuatl* (Mexico City: Porrúa 2000).

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## Romans in Spain and Britain as Models and Anti-Models for New World Encounters

*David A. Lupher*

Early modern Spanish, English, and French encounters with the “New World” and its natives differed widely in aims, methods, and results, and the three groups were notoriously at variance with each other.<sup>1</sup> But they shared a common ancestral experience that, in both similar and quite distinct ways, influenced how they understood and justified their presence and activities in America. Colonists from all three national groups set forth from lands that had once been subjected to brutal conquest and imperial domination by the same people: the ancient Romans. This cultural memory reawakened as reports of encounters between Europeans and Amerindians inspired a more vivid awareness of how – and why – the Romans had encountered and subjugated these Europeans’ own ancestors. This in turn led many early modern Europeans to see themselves in a complex set of mirrored roles: as conquerors or intrusive neighbors of peoples who reassuringly or disconcertingly echoed the nature and cultural level of their own ancestors – and as emulators, for better or worse, of the impressive but also problematic Roman imperialists.

In a book published in 2003, I explored sixteenth-century Spanish appropriations of – and challenges to – the model of ancient Roman imperialism.<sup>2</sup> Here I will very briefly revisit aspects of what I explored there. In a later book on classical receptions in early New England, I touched more briefly on some English uses of the Roman imperial model.<sup>3</sup> In this chapter, I offer results of my more recent investigations of uses of the Romans in Britain by promoters of the Virginia Colony in the first two and a half decades of the seventeenth century. For the French experience, see Sara Melzer’s *Colonizer or Colonized: The Hidden Histories of Early Modern France*, a stimulating reading of early

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- 1 I intend the phrase “New World” (and “Old”) to reflect early modern European perspectives and perceptions, not American realities. But from here on out, though I shall not usually employ “scare quotes” for “New World”, I invite the reader to imagine them.
  - 2 David A. Lupher, *Romans in a New World: Classical Models in Sixteenth-Century Spanish America* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2003).
  - 3 David A. Lupher, *Greeks, Romans, and Pilgrims: Classical Receptions in Early New England* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

modern French writings both about their own early history and about their American experiences as a kind of “postcolonial” discourse reflecting the powerful, if often subterranean, cultural memory of Gallic subjugation to the Romans.<sup>4</sup> Taking the famous French “quarrel of the ancients and the moderns” in a broad sense, both conceptually and temporally, Melzer sees in France’s distant past as Roman Gaul a hitherto unrecognized resonant presence in much of early modern French elite culture, both at home and in America. It is tempting to apply the title of Melzer’s book to the Spaniards and English, though with a friendly amendment: instead of *Colonizer or Colonized*, I would suggest *Colonizer and Colonized*. For the New World experiences of all three national groups – and perhaps others as well – were often colored by the heady sense that modern Europeans saw themselves both as colonizers and as descendants of victims or beneficiaries of colonization.

## 1 Roman Spain and Spanish America

A central feature of this double engagement with the classical world and the “New World” was the Europeans’ perception that the American Natives were in certain fundamental ways cultural kin to their own ancestors, the “barbarians” subjugated by the Romans. Here, however, we meet an anterior question: whom did the early modern Europeans regard as their true ancestors? Like other contemporary Europeans, sixteenth-century Spaniards had a range of ancestors to choose from.<sup>5</sup> The Romans (or Hispano-Romans) of the Iberian provinces were inevitably popular, having contributed to European culture such intellectual luminaries as Seneca and Lucan and having given Rome the emperors Trajan, Hadrian, and Theodosius. But the Visigoths were also attractive ancestors, allowing the Reconquista to be interpreted as an act of sacred vengeance against Muslim invaders who overthrew a Christian kingdom. In the discourse of the New World, however, it was the pre-Roman Iberians who proved especially resonant and useful, given the intriguing perception that they exhibited a cultural kinship with the Natives of America.

This kinship was eloquently deployed in August of 1550, in the course of the celebrated dispute between Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, translator of Aristotle and

4 Melzer, *Colonizer or Colonized: The Hidden Histories of Early Modern France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012). See also ch. 3 (“Nos Ancêtres Les Américains”) of Brian Brazeau’s *Writing a New France, 1604–1632: Empire and Early Modern French Identity* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009), a book that, alas, only came to my attention when the Covid pandemic prevented me from securing it in time.

5 See Lupher, *Romans in a New World*, Ch. 5: “Romans and Iberians/Spaniards and Indians”.

royal chaplain and chronicler, and Bartolomé de las Casas, Dominican Bishop of Chiapas and tireless defender of the dignity and rights of the peoples of the New World.<sup>6</sup> It was Sepúlveda's contention that the backward cultural level of the American Natives assimilated them to the status of Aristotle's "slaves by nature", and central to his argument was the shocking practice of human sacrifice. In response to this, Las Casas boldly ventured the argument that, far from being a proof of cultural barbarity, human sacrifice implies a highly developed spiritual sense: a people's recognition that divinity deserves the most precious of gifts – human lives. But he also offered a defence of human sacrifice on comparative cultural grounds. Contending that learned evidence concurred that human sacrifice had been practiced in most regions of the known world at one time or another, Las Casas offered his Spanish audience this sobering bit of information: "Strabo reminds us that our own Spanish people (*Hispani nostri*), who reproach the poor Indian peoples for human sacrifice, used to sacrifice captives and their horses".<sup>7</sup> Thus, Las Casas's pre-Roman Iberians were blood kin to modern Spaniards and cultural kin to modern Americans. But his most powerful triangulation of ancient Iberians, modern Spaniards, and American Natives was deployed against a fourth people, much admired by Sepúlveda and other defenders of Spanish imperial expansion in America: the ancient Romans.

Here it is important to bear in mind that the most spectacular phases of Spain's American conquests were conducted during the reign of Charles I of Spain, better known as Charles V, "Emperor of the Romans". Central to his self-projection was nostalgia for ancient Roman glory, carefully fostered by his neo-Ghibelline chancellor Mercurino de Gattinara. Though the conquistadors who brought the empire of the Aztecs under Spanish rule were not, in the first instance, operating under the mandate of the Emperor, they too hankered for the prestige won by the ancient Romans, and their self-promotional writings often challenged the reputation of Roman generals who had traveled shorter distances and fought fewer battles than they.<sup>8</sup> The model of the Romans was

6 See Lewis Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians: A Study in Race Prejudice in the Modern World* (Chicago: Regnery, 1959) and Anthony Pagden, *The Fall of Natural Man: The American Indian and the Origins of Comparative Ethnology*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

7 Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Apologia*, ch. 52, in *Obras completas*, vol. 9, ed. by Angel Losada (Madrid: Alianza, 1988), 426; Las Casas, *In Defense of the Indians*, trans. Stafford Poole (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974), 224. Las Casas's point had been anticipated by Fray Julián Garcés in a 1537 tract addressed to Pope Paul III. See Andrew Laird, "Humanism and the Humanity of the Peoples of the New World: Fray Julián Garcés, *De habilitate et capacitate gentium*, Rome, 1537", *Studi umanistici Piceni* 34 (2014), 194 and 207–8.

8 See Luper, *Romans in a New World*, Ch. 1, "Conquistadors and Romans".

also central to the propagandistic contentions of proponents of the Spanish conquests like Sepúlveda. In the *Democrates secundus*, the Latin dialogue whose potential publication was the issue under discussion in the debate in Valladolid, the learned Aristotelian and humanist declared:

Therefore, let it remain and be established that, on the authority of the very wisest men, it is just and in accord with nature that intelligent, upright, and civilized men rule over those who are unlike themselves. For this is the justification that the Romans had for ruling most peoples with a legitimate and just rule ... so that they might destroy and correct the barbarous customs and vices of many peoples by means of the good laws that they used and the virtue in which they were preeminent.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, in Sepúlveda's view, the Romans were noble, righteous, and benevolent conquerors, fit models for Spanish rulers and conquistadors.

The propriety of the Roman model of imperial expansion received withering scorn from Las Casas – as it had earlier from his fellow Dominican Melchor Cano, who sat on the tribunal in Valladolid, and as it would later from Domingo de Soto, another member of the junta.<sup>10</sup> In addition to arguing that the Roman Empire “did not arise through justice but was acquired by tyranny and violence”, Las Casas countered Sepúlveda's dim view of New World “barbarians” by nominating the humanist's beloved Romans as far better candidates for “barbarian” status:

This people itself was ruled by heinous vices and detestable practices, especially in its shameful games and hateful sacrifices, as in the games and plays held in the circus and in the obscene sacrifices to Priapus and Bacchus. In these everything was so disgraceful, ugly, and repugnant to sound reason that they far outdistanced all other nations in insensitivity of mind and barbarism (*mentis stupore et barbarie*).<sup>11</sup>

In spite of the “quickness of judgment and mental expertise” by which “they could make themselves tyrants over mankind and subdue foreign territories amid great destruction”, the Romans in fact “became like animals”. This was a

9 Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, *Democrates Secundus*, Bk. 1, 8.4, in *Obras completas*, vol. 3, ed. by A. Coroleu Lletget (Pozoblanco: Ayuntamiento de Pozoblanco, 1997), 63.

10 For Cano, see Lupher, *Romans in a New World*, 85–94, and for Soto, see 61–68 and 93–98.

11 Las Casas, *Apología*, ch. 52 and ch. 5 (*Obras completas*, vol. 9, 592 and 118); as translated by Poole, *In Defense of the Indians*, 321 and 50.

theme that Las Casas developed more fully in his massive, long unpublished *Apologética historia sumaria* where Native American customs were judged distinctly superior to those of the classical world and to supposed modern European survivals of Greco-Roman customs.<sup>12</sup>

Las Casas's most arresting polemical strategy in Valladolid was to compare the current events in America with one notably dark episode in the story of Roman imperial expansion: the Roman conquest of Spain – famous even in antiquity for its brutality. With biting sarcasm, he asked if Sepúlveda

thinks that the war of the Romans against the Spanish was justified in order to free them from barbarism? And this question also: Did the Spanish wage an unjust war when they vigorously defended themselves against them? ... Do you think that the Romans, once they had subjugated the wild and barbaric peoples of Spain, could with secure right divide *all of you* among themselves, handing over so many head of both males and females as allotments to individuals? And do you then conclude that the Romans could have stripped your rulers of their authority and consigned *all of you*, after you had been deprived of your liberty, to wretched labors, especially in searching for gold and silver lodes and mining and refining the metals? And if the Romans finally did that ... would you not judge that you also had the right to defend your freedom, indeed your very lives, by war?<sup>13</sup>

Las Casas here forced upon his listeners a vivid awareness of what their countrymen were doing in the New World by visualizing the remarkably similar plight of their Iberian ancestors when *they* were being brutally subjugated, deprived of political autonomy, robbed, enslaved, and sent to the mines. Indeed, he glided effortlessly from the Spaniards of the second century BCE to a startlingly immediate “all of you” (*vos omnes*). As for the Romans, far from being fit spiritual ancestors and role-models for modern Spaniards, they were the brutal oppressors of ancient Spaniards. Decent modern Spaniards needed to realize that they had far more in common with the Indians of the New World than with the Romans of the Old.<sup>14</sup>

12 See Luper, *Romans in a New World*, ch. 6 (“Romans and Indians”), esp. 255–88.

13 Las Casas, *Apologia*, ch. 4 (*Obras completas*, vol. 9, 106); Poole's translation (*In Defense of the Indians*), 43 (emphases added).

14 Las Casas's comparison of the Spanish conquest of Mexico with the Roman conquest of Spain seems to have been anticipated by Franciscans in their instruction of Nahua youths in the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco. See the discussion of notary Jerónimo López's 1545 letter to Charles V in *Romans in a New World*, 229–34.



## 2      Picts, Britons, and Virginians: Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Explorations of North America and Roman Britain

Later in that century and early in the next, Englishmen engaged in American colonial ventures also turned to their own distant past, though with distinctly different valuations of the ancient history that they were evoking. The Roman conquest of Britain came to their minds as they assessed the English presence in the New World, and the ancient Britons and Picts seemed to resemble the Amerindians they encountered – or imagined encountering.<sup>15</sup> This application of European ancient history to contemporary events and processes in America was often developed by colonial promoters and supporters who themselves never left England. But in accord with this volume's focus on the classical tradition in (and not just about) the Americas, our main interest here will be the use of early Britain by those who had direct experience of the New World.

The first Englishman to suggest a cultural kinship between Amerindians and pre-Roman Britons was apparently John White (ca. 1540–ca. 1593), who was commissioned by Sir Walter Raleigh in 1585 to assist the Oxford scientist Thomas Hariot in recording the flora, fauna, and appearance and customs of the Indians of the Carolina coast in a doomed venture of settlement. The impressive watercolors White produced back in England from sketches made on the voyage are today in the British Museum.<sup>16</sup> Apparently around the same time, he executed five watercolor drawings, also in the British Museum, of ancient inhabitants of Britain: three naked, elaborately tattooed figures commonly identified as Picts (two men, one holding a severed head, and a woman); two clothed figures usually labeled ancient Britons (a man with a suspiciously modern long sword and a woman with a spear).<sup>17</sup> The fact that White drew

15 The fullest and most recent study of this topos is Ch. 3 of Alan S. Rome's *The English Embrace of the American Indian: Ideas of Humanity in Early America* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). Richard Hingley's excellent study of the growth of English knowledge about Roman Britain (*The Recovery of Roman Britain 1586–1906: A Colony So Fertile*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) is alert to Elizabethan and Jacobean colonial discourse: see esp. 20–21, 59–67. See also Stuart Piggott, *Ancient Britons and the Antiquarian Imagination: Ideas from the Renaissance to the Regency* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), esp. 73–96, and Peter Burke, "America and the Rewriting of World History," in *America in European Consciousness 1493–1750*, ed. by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 33–51.

16 For reproductions and commentary, see Paul Hulton, *America 1585: The Complete Drawings of John White* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press and British Museum, 1984).

17 Hulton, *America 1585*, 91–95 (Pl. 65–69). The identification of White's first three figures as Picts derives from De Bry's captions for his engravings of the headhunting male and the

both New World Natives and ancient Britons implies that the analogy was in his mind, though it should be noted that he also produced drawings of Turks and a Tartar, in the manner of contemporary costume books.<sup>18</sup>

The analogy became explicit in 1590, when the Flemish Protestant printer and engraver Theodor de Bry issued in Frankfurt the first instalment of a multi-volume series of lavishly illustrated accounts of New World explorations. Issued in separate Latin, French, German, and English versions, this first volume combined Thomas Hariot's first-hand account of the land and people encountered on the Grenville expedition with 22 engravings based on White's watercolors of Virginians and five of his Picts and Britons.<sup>19</sup> On the title page prefaced to these last five engravings, De Bry set forth his reason for this visual digression from the Virginians: "to shoue how that the Inhabitants of the great Bretannie have bin in times past as sauage as those of Virginia".<sup>20</sup>

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woman. In his freer adaptation of the other two figures, De Bry identified them as "neighbors" to the Picts; hence they are commonly identified (as by Hulton) as Britons.

- 18 Although De Bry explicitly attributed the paintings of Picts and Britons to White, Hulton's claim (*America*, 1585, 17–18) that their true author was another artist/explorer, Jacques Le Moyne, has been influential: e.g., Piggott, *Ancient Britons and the Antiquarian Imagination*, 76; Sam Smiles, "John White and British Antiquity", in *European Visions, American Voices*, ed. by Kim Sloan (London: British Museum, 2009), 106–112, see 106–7; Stephanie Moser, *Ancestral Images: The Iconography of Human Origins* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 77; Juliet Fleming, "The Renaissance Tattoo", in *Written on the Body: The Tattoo in European and American History*, ed. by Jane Caplan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 61–82; 73; and the present writer in two books: *Romans in a New World*, 227, and *Greeks, Romans, and Pilgrims*, 65n86. But Christian Feest persuasively countered Hulton's arguments in an unduly neglected article, "Jacques Le Moyne Minus Four", *European Review of Native American Studies* 2, no. 1 (1988): 33–38; 37. Joan-Pau Rubiés, apparently independently, also rejected Hulton's claim: "Texts, Images, and the Perception of 'Savages' in Early Modern Europe: What We Can Learn from White and Harriot", in Sloan, ed., *European Visions*, 120–30; 127. In the same volume as Rubiés, however, the botanical artist Sally Birch defends Hulton's claim: "Through an Artist's Eye: Observations on Aspects of Copying in two Groups of Works by John White, c. 1585–90", 85–96; 94–5. Though aware of Feest's arguments, Birch addresses them only obliquely.
- 19 De Bry's engravings are based on four of White's surviving watercolors, omitting the second tattooed male, but adding what he labeled "The trwe picture of a yonge dowgter of the Pictes", a version of which exists as an elaborate miniature in the Yale Center for British Art. Many (including the YCBA) have accepted Hulton's attribution of the miniature to Le Moyne (*America* 1585, 18), but Feest demonstrated that it was a gifted artist's version of De Bry's engraving ("Jacques Le Moyne Minus Four", 37).
- 20 In the French edition (which was the first of the four published), the translator Charles de l'Escluse (the horticulturalist better known as Carolus Clusius) offered "sauvages", and in his Latin version the word was "silvestres". The German translator ("Christ. P.") rendered this as "wild".

Those perusing De Bry's impressive engravings, however, would more likely have concluded that these Old World barbarians were distinctly *more* "savage" than Virginians, all of whom were depicted as engaging in peaceful activities, though descriptions provided by Hariot did allude to warfare.<sup>21</sup> When one turns the title page of the British supplement, however, one is greeted by a fearsomely tattooed, well-armed Pictish warrior holding an enemy's severed head by the hair. Indeed, De Bry heightened the horror of White's original by adding another severed head on the ground at the Pict's feet.<sup>22</sup> Also, four of the five Picts or neighbors De Bry depicted are girded with a massive, curved sword – and that includes two of the women. The only one without a sword is the "yonge dowgter of the Pictes", who supports herself on a spear a couple of heads higher than herself. While none of the subsequent engravings conveys quite the savagery of the first, all imply inhabitants of formidably warlike societies. Thus, De Bry's engravings reveal that his claim that the ancient inhabitants of Britain were "as savage as those of Virginia" is an ironic understatement, suggesting that modern Englishmen would find the Indians of Virginia easier to settle among than the Romans had found the ancient Britons.

In the first years of James I as king of England, Scotland, and Ireland, many Britons became fascinated with their ancestral origins. Accordingly, in 1611, woodcuts of four of the De Bry/White images became the central feature of a chapter of John Speed's *Historie of Great Britaine* designed "to propose unto the eye of our now glorious and gorgious Britaines, some generall draughts of our poore and rude Progenitours".<sup>23</sup> Lest a reader object that two figures De Bry had labeled "Pictes" (the head-hunting male and the "yonge dowgter") were

21 The best discussion of the authorship of the descriptions of De Bry's engravings of White's Virginians and Britons is Rubiés, "Text, Images, and the Perception of 'Savages'", 127.

22 Similarly, Alden T. Vaughan noted that "White and de Bry made the ancient English [*sic*] appear more barbarous and ferocious than the Indians portrayed in the main section of Hariot's book": "Early English Paradigms for New World Natives", *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 102 (1993): 33–67; 53. Andrew Hadfield suggested that De Bry's Picts would have reminded English viewers of the "wild Irish", thereby suggesting that the English settlement of Virginia would proceed much more smoothly than the pacification of Ireland: "Irish Colonies and the Americas", in *Envisioning an English Empire: Jamestown and the Making of the North Atlantic World*, ed. by Robert J. Applebaum and John Wood Sweet (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), 172–91; 184.

23 John Speed, *The History of Great Britaine under the Conquests of the Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans* (London: John Sudbury and George Humble, 1611), Book 5, Ch. 7, 179 (woodcuts on 180–81). Vaughan overlooked Speed when he asserted that White's paintings had virtually no impact on Englishmen's views of their own ancestors ("Early English Paradigms", 53 n. 42). Smiles, convinced that by then the Saxons had become established as the true English ancestors, ignored Speed's repeated assumption that the Picts and Britons were ancestors of modern Britons ("John White and British Antiquity", 110–11). In

unlikely “Progenitours”, Speed summarized William Camden’s contention that the so-called Picts were not a separate people from the other Britons; rather, they were a mixture of North Britons with other Britons fleeing the Roman invasion of the southern and central part of the island.<sup>24</sup> Thus, the figures that De Bry identified as “Pictes” served Speed as representations of the earlier phase of the culture of the Britons, while the figures the engraver had labeled “nighbours to the Pictes” represented the later, partially Romanized Britons. The female Briton called to Speed’s mind “the most valient British lady Boudicea”, who in turn reminded him of “another Great Lady of British race”, recently deceased.<sup>25</sup> Thus Speed’s impressive, influential, and oft-reprinted history played a major role in popularizing the notion that the pre-Roman Britons were “our ancient progenitors” and that they had passed through a process of cultural evolution in the direction of civility – “at first rude and uncivil”, then in time “reclaimed to a more civill respect of their apparell and apprehension of literature”.<sup>26</sup> The suggestion lay close to hand that if the fearsome headhunters who once inhabited Britain could be “reclaimed” to civility, then it was plausible to harbor hopes for the future of wild peoples living far to the west.

If John Speed was influential in popularizing the notion that the modern English should regard the pre-Roman Britons as their “fathers”, a book that first appeared in English the year before (1610) painted a seductively attractive canvas of the Roman conquest and occupation of Britain, the other key element in British colonial discourse of the New World. This was Philemon Holland’s translation of William Camden’s *Britannia*, which had first appeared in Latin in 1586 and had undergone many revisions and expansions over the years. Though mainly a “chorographical” work, offering an antiquarian survey of the counties of England and Wales, it began with an extensive account of the peoples of Britain up to the Norman Conquest. Camden’s *Britannia* was particularly striking in the loving attention it paid to the reconstruction of – and celebration of – the Roman occupation of Britain, with the attention to classical sources to be expected of a master at Westminster School, but also with

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any case, Speed believed that the Saxons and the Britons shared a common origin: Bk. 5, Ch. 3, 161.

24 Speed, *History*, Bk. 5, Ch. 7, 181, where the marginal note shows that he was using the 1607 Latin edition of Camden’s *Britannia, sive Florentissimorum Regnorum Angliae, Scotiae, Hiberniae ... Descriptio* (London: George Bishop and John Norton, 1607) 82–85; cf. Philemon Holland’s translation, *Britain, or A Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland ...* (London: George Bishop and John Norton, 1610), 114–19.

25 Speed, *History*, Bk. 5, Ch. 7, 182; see Hingley, *Recovery of Roman Britain*, 52.

26 Speed, *History*, Book 5, last paragraph of ch. 6, 178.

an awareness of inscriptions and coinage that intensified as the book went into later editions.<sup>27</sup> His long section “Romans in Britaine” indeed exaggerated the extent to which Britain was fully Romanized, asserting “that the Britans and Romans in so many ages, by a blessed and joyfull mutuall ingrafting, as it were, have growen into one flocke and nation”.<sup>28</sup> Roman civilization was, in Camden’s view, not only a good in itself; it also made possible an even greater good:

This yoke of the Romanes although it were grievous, yet comfortable it proved and a saving health unto them: for that healthsome light of Jesus Christ shone withal upon the Britans, whereof more hereafter, and the brightnesse of that most glorious Empire, chased away all savage barbarisme from the Britans minds, like as from other nations whom it had subdued.<sup>29</sup>

Camden’s point was that the Romans’ “comfortable yoke” made the initial spread of Christianity in Britain possible even without their intention or desire, perhaps beginning with the conversion of the legendary British king Lucius, whom Camden dated to the reign of Commodus (180–92) – or even earlier, if “our Ecclesiasticall writers” were to be trusted, with Joseph of Arimathea.<sup>30</sup>

### 3 Rome’s Civilizing Mission and the Promotion of the Virginia Company

Bringing White, De Bry, Speed, and Camden together, we have the elements of interlinked *topoi* that played a significant role in the promotion of English colonization in America, in particular the publicity campaign launched in support of the reorganized and re-chartered Virginia Company and its settlement at Jamestown in 1609. Far from being incomprehensibly alien, the natives

27 For Camden on Roman Britain, see Hingley, *Recovery of Roman Britain*, 24–36.

28 Camden, *Britannia* (Holland trans.), “Romans in Britaine”, 88B.

29 Camden, *Britannia* (Holland trans.), “Romans in Britaine”, 63B. Though the Latin first words of this passage are the epigraph to his first chapter, Curran’s *Roman Invasions* impressively demonstrates Tudor and early Jacobean writers’ ambivalence on ancient Rome, suggesting that Camden’s words here invited readers “to see the bright side of a phenomenon, Roman occupation, which he imagines they dislike”, 15; John E. Curran, Jr., *Roman Invasions: The British History, Protestant Anti-Romanism, and the Historical Imagination in England, 1530–1660* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2002).

30 Camden, *Britannia* (Holland trans.), “Romans in Britaine”, 67C–68D.

of Virginia were purportedly cultural kin of the colonizers' ancestors, the "sauvage" Britons. The civilizing role once played by the Romans had now passed to the modern British. Fully in line with Camden's rosy view of Roman aims and behavior, we find no hint here of the cynical view of Las Casas and some other Spaniards of a few years back. This is not to say that ambivalence about ancient Rome was unknown or unimportant in early modern Britain.<sup>31</sup> But it played no discernible role in the discourse of colonial promotion. For these modern descendants of the wild Britons, Roman imperialism was an inspiring model, not a grim historical precedent and warning.

The promoters of the Virginia Colony embedded this historical paradigm in the context of the Company's insistence that the principal aim of the colony was altruistic and evangelical. The first charter (1606) proclaimed that the mission of the English in Virginia was first to bring the natives "to humane civilitie and to a settled and quiet govemente" with the goal of bringing Christianity "to suche people as yet live in darkensse and myserble ignorance of the true knowledge and worshippe of god".<sup>32</sup> This claim persisted until the devastating attack of 1622 inspired a very different tone. Unsurprisingly, the sincerity of this aim of the Virginia colonization project has met with considerable skepticism, though valiant attempts to take it at more or less face value were launched in the 1940s by Louis B. Wright and Perry Miller, and these have been followed in recent years by several other scholars.<sup>33</sup> The safest course may be

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31 See Curran's *Roman Invasions* on early modern English "anti-Romanism" of various varieties. I believe that both the *De iure belli* and the *De armis Romanis* of Alberico Gentili, Regius Professor of Civil Law in late Elizabethan Oxford, displayed marked ambivalence toward the Roman model of imperialism: see my "The *De armis Romanis* and the Exemplum of Roman Imperialism", in *The Roman Foundations of the Law of Nations: Alberico Gentili and the Justice of Empire*, ed. by Benedict Kingsbury and Benjamin Straumann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 85–100.

32 "Letters patent to Sir Thomas Gates and others", Philip L. Barbour, ed. *The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter 1606–1609*, vol. 1 (Hakluyt Society; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 25. For an engaging and richly supported exploration of the theme of "civility" in the early modern discourses of ancient Britain, comparative ethnology, and colonization, see Keith Thomas, *In Pursuit of Civility: Manners and Civilization in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2018), ch. 4 ("the Progress of Civilization") and ch. 5 ("Exporting Civility").

33 Louis B. Wright, *Religion and Empire: The Alliance between Piety and Commerce in English Expansion 1558–1625* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1943), esp. chapters 5 and 6; Perry Miller, "Religion and Society in the Early Literature of Virginia", repr. as ch. 4 of Miller, *Errand into the Wilderness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1956), 99–140. More recent contributions have been John Parker's "Religion and the Virginia Colony, 1609–10", in *The Westward Enterprise*, ed. by K.R. Andrews, N.P. Canny, and P.E.H. Hair (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 245–70, and Ch. 4 of Thomas

at least to acknowledge the usefulness of the claim for the Company's efforts to attract investors. Despite an initial reluctance to present full-throated justifications of the project, the decision to reorganize and re-charter the Company in 1609 initiated a publicity campaign in which, as Loren Pennington put it, "conversion became the answer to all of Virginia's promotional needs", and in which a more benign, inviting portrait of the receptive nature of the native Virginians was generated.<sup>34</sup> It was in the context of this promotional initiative that evocations of the Roman invasion of ancient Britain came into play. A few instances of the "Romans and Britons" paradigm should suffice before we focus on two neglected resurfacings of White's drawings (via De Bry's engravings) in documents composed by men whose knowledge of the Amerindians did not depend upon the eyewitness accounts of others.

The campaign to support the re-chartered Virginia Company began in February 1609, with the tract *Nova Britannia*, in which London Alderman Robert Johnson suggested that the English could gauge the good they could do the Virginians by recalling "our former auncient miseries, wherein wee had continued brutish poore and naked Brittans to this day, if Julius Caesar with his Romaine Legions, (or some other) had not laid the ground to make us tame and civill".<sup>35</sup> A couple of months later, in the first sermon promoting the reformed Company, Southwark preacher William Symonds urged colonists reluctant to leave their own "sweete country" to recall that there was once a time when England was "as wilde a forrest, but nothing so fruitfull, as Virginia, and the people in their nakednes did arme themsevles in a coate armor of Woad" until "by the civill care of conquerers" the land became "a very paradise".<sup>36</sup> Three days later, Robert Gray dedicated to the Company a printed sermon (*A Good Speed to Virginia*), in which he evoked ancient peoples who supposedly "willingly submitted themselves to the subjection of the Romanes, being allured thereunto by Justice, equitie, clemencie, and upright dealing of the Romaine captaines".<sup>37</sup> The following February, William Crashaw, preacher of the Inner Temple, in a propemptic sermon delivered to the new governor, Lord De la

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Scanlan's *Colonial Writing and the New World 1583–1671: Allegories of Desire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

34 Loren E. Pennington, "The Amerindian in English Promotional Literature", in Andrews et al., ed., *Westward Enterprise*, 175–94; 188.

35 Robert Johnson, *Nova Britannia: Offering Most Excellent fruites by Planting in Virginia* (London: Samuel Macham, 1609), C2r.

36 William Symonds, *Virginia: A Sermon Preached at White-Chappel* (= *Virginea Britannia*) (London: John Windet for Eleazar Edgar and William Welby, 1609), 18–19.

37 Robert Gray, *A Good Speed to Virginia* (London: Felix Kyngston for William Welby, 1609), C2r.

Warr, imagined that the Virginians “rather invite us then resist us”, for they were a people “inclinable ... first to civility, and so to religion”.<sup>38</sup> After all, Crashaw continued, Englishmen should remember that “the time was when wee were savage and uncivill, and worshipped the divell, as now they do”. Given that “for our civilitie wee were beholden to the Romanes”, it is the duty of the English, Crashaw concluded, to pass along that ancient benefaction.<sup>39</sup>

The most sustained attempt to develop the notion that the Amerindians were cultural kin to pre-Roman Europeans was not the work of a promotional preacher, but of a French Catholic lawyer with direct experience of the New World. Despite its foreign provenance, Marc Lescarbot's *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (1609) became an integral part of the campaign to mobilize support for the re-chartering of the Virginia Colony in 1609, for Richard Hakluyt induced the Huguenot Pierre Erondelle to turn out a “quickie” English translation of a substantial portion of it, published in June 1609. The translation's relevance to the Virginia venture announced itself on the title page: *Nova Francia: Or the Description of that part of New France, which is one continent with Virginia*. In his dedication to Prince Henry and his address to the reader, Erondelle sustained this suggestion that an encouraging French account of Acadia would induce English readers to be all the more optimistic about a Virginia settlement that “stands more Southerly, neerer to the Sunne” and thus was even more conducive to “the salvation of innumerable souls”.<sup>40</sup>

The description of the second book (the third in the French original) in the table of contents shows that Lescarbot's eagerness to establish parallels between modern New World natives and ancient Europeans was not incidental but programmatic: “Containing the customes and maners of life of the West Indians of New France, compared to them of the ancient people of these parts; and specially to them that be in one and the selfe same parallele and degree” – an addendum that adds geohumoral plausibility to his tendency to select Gallic and Germanic comparanda.<sup>41</sup> It appears that Lescarbot's aim in seeking European parallels for New World customs was to suggest a French-Indian cultural kinship (with, at moments, the suggestion of an actual Noachian kinship) that would provide the French with an excuse to

38 William Crashaw, *A Sermon Preached in London before the right honorable the Lord Lawarre, Lord Governour and Captaine Generall of Virginia* (London: William Welby, 1610), C3v.

39 Crashaw, *Sermon Preached in London*, C4v.

40 Marc Lescarbot, *Nova-Francia: Or the Description of that part of New France, which is one continent with Virginia*, trans. by Pierre Erondelle (London: George Bishop, 1609), ¶¶1r, ¶¶2r.

41 Lescarbot, *Nova-Francia*, ¶¶¶1r.



circumvent the papal restriction of a licence to evangelize to the Spanish and Portuguese.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the illiteracy of the Acadians resembled the determination of the Gallic Druids to commit nothing to writing, for “writing maketh men slothfull, and negligent in learning”.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the hospitality of the Canadians called to mind classical authors who claimed that this was “a virtue peculiar to the ancient Gaulois”, though “Tacitus giveth the same praise to the Germans”.<sup>44</sup> Though it was true that the Indians, in their ignorance of wood-working, “dine upon the broad table of the worlde”, we must remember that “our ancient Gaullois were no better than they, who (Diodorus saith) did use the same”.<sup>45</sup>

Lescarbot’s most fully developed comparison of ancient Europeans and modern Americans occurs in the chapter entitled “Of the Paintings, Markes, Incisions, and Ornaments of their body”. After mentioning the age-old tradition of ladies painting themselves and the vermillion painted on the faces of Roman generals in triumphal processions, he launched into an elaborate account of “the Picts, an ancient people of Scythia”, who moved north in the late first century, and then, centuries later, joined with the Saxons and Scots in attacking Britain, where they demanded British wives and, upon being refused, “they retired themselves to the Scots”. After surveying other ancient peoples who sported body-art – including “the Englishmen likewise, then called Britons” – Lescarbot revealed his main inspiration in this matter:

Briefly, it was a sport in the old time to see so many Antikes, men and women: for there are found yet old Pictures, which he that hath made the History of the Englishmens voyage into Virginia hath cut in brasse, where the Picts of both sex are painted out, with their fair incisions, and swords hanging upon the naked flesh, as Herodian describeth them.<sup>46</sup>

Even the reference to the early third-century Syrian-Greek historian Herodian (3.14.6–8) derived from De Bry’s edition of Hariot, for the passage was quoted by the eminent botanist Charles l’Escluse (Clusius) in a note appended to his Latin version. Lescarbot proceeded to draw the comforting conclusion: “This humour of painting having beene so generall in these parts [i.e., the northern

42 So Melzer, *Colonizer or Colonized*, 178.

43 Lescarbot, *Nova-Francia*, Bk. 2, Ch. 15, 221. Lescarbot is paraphrasing Caesar, *De bello Gallico* 6.14.4.

44 Lescarbot, *Nova-Francia*, Bk. 2, Ch. 14, 213.

45 Lescarbot, *Nova-Francia*, Bk. 2, Ch. 29, 243.

46 Lescarbot, *Nova-Francia*, Bk. 2, Ch. 11, 190 (p. 729 of the French original).

latitudes of Europe], there is no cause of mocking, if the people of the West Indies have done, and yet do the like ..."<sup>47</sup>

Not long after Erondelle's translation of much of Lescarbot's *Histoire* appeared, William Strachey, a colonist/promoter with direct experience of America, penned the most learned (or at least the most ostentatious) elaboration of the "ancient Britons paradigm" by an Englishman – and, like Marc Lescarbot, he supported his appeal to ancient history with the vivid help of John White *via* Theodor de Bry. Moved by Strachey's gripping eyewitness account of Sir Thomas Gates's shipwreck and mutiny-plagued sojourn on Bermuda, Richard Martin, Secretary of the Virginia Company, urged him to write a formal account of the Virginia Colony, of which Strachey had been appointed Secretary.<sup>48</sup> Though begun from notes he had made in 1609, Strachey's incomplete draft of his *Historie of Travell into Virginia Britannia* was largely composed in England in 1612.<sup>49</sup> But it appears that Virginia Company investors withdrew support from this project, presumably due to critical comments by Strachey on the conduct of the venture, particularly unwelcome during the promotion of the Third Charter (granted in March of that year). Accordingly, Strachey had at least three copies of the incomplete draft prepared and sent to potential patrons, none of whom "bit", for the work remained unpublished until 1849.<sup>50</sup> Today Princeton owns the copy sent to Henry Percy, Ninth Earl of Northumberland (then residing in the Tower of London); Oxford's Bodleian Library owns that sent to Sir Allen Apsley, Purveyor to the King's Navy; and the British Library owns the last of the copies, sent out around 1618 to Francis Bacon.<sup>51</sup>

A remarkable feature of all three extant copies of Strachey's *Historie* has gone unsuspected by those who know the work through either of the two

47 Lescarbot, *Nova-Francia*, Bk. 2, Ch. 11, 190–91.

48 See Louis B. Wright and Virginia Freund's introduction to their edition of Strachey's *Historie of Travell into Virginia Britannia* (London: Hakluyt Society, Second Series, n. CIII, 1953), xxv. Strachey's *True Reportory* was not printed until 1625.

49 For the composition history of Strachey's *Historie*, see the introduction to the edition by Wright and Freund, xxiv–xxvii.

50 Karen Ordahl Kupperman (private communication, Nov. 5, 2018) suggests that Strachey's manuscripts were "special gifts to select people, not attempts to get published". In her view, they served as "job application statements – he offers to return to Virginia or to take other employment offered". I take this opportunity to thank Kupperman for her many helpful suggestions and corrections concerning this article.

51 Strachey addressed Bacon as Lord Verulam, which he became in 1618. In 1621, Bacon was disgraced, and Strachey died. But the BL copy appears to be in the same hand (not the author's) as the other two, which were apparently sent out in late 1612 or shortly thereafter: see Wright and Freund, xvii.

editions published by the Hakluyt Society: R.H. Major's of Bacon's copy (1849) or Wright and Freund's of the Percy Manuscript (1953). All three manuscripts "cannibalized" De Bry's 1590 edition of Hariot's *Briefe and true report*, each embellishing the lifted material with careful hand-coloring.<sup>52</sup> The title pages of two of the manuscripts (Bodleian and British Museum) were detached from De Bry and hand-colored, the boxes of print having been snipped out and replaced with the title and description of Strachey's own work. In all three, the dedicatory epistle was followed by the fold-out hand-colored engraving of a circular dance of the Virginians (De Bry's plate XVIII), on a flap of which was inscribed a brief poem on our familiar theme beginning, "Wild as they are, accept them so were we". After the manuscript of Strachey's *Historie*, all three manuscripts pasted in the other twenty-seven plates of Virginians. Also, all three manuscripts included the five Picts and Britons, all delicately colored – placed after the Virginians in the Bodleian and British Library copy, but in the Princeton manuscript at the beginning of Book 2 of Strachey's history. In the British Library's copy, those last five engravings are introduced by an adaptation of De Bry's caption: "These 5 Pictures following are of the Picts a people which in the old tyme did inhabite one part in this our Country of Great Britainie, and are here inserted to expresse how the Inhabitants of this now so flourishing Island have bene in tymes past as salvage as those of Virginia".

Strachey's decision to go to the considerable extra expense of having the engravings of the Picts and their neighbors colored and included with the colored Virginia engravings is congruent with his comparative interest in body-painting, as demonstrated in Chapter 5 of Book 1.<sup>53</sup> There he attributed the

52 R.H. Major made no mention of these plunderings from De Bry (London: Hakluyt Society, 1849). Wright and Freund (xiv) mention the De Bry engravings and the colored Hole/Smith map of Virginia (published in London in 1612), but imply that they are features only of the Princeton Percy MS. In fact, they are in all three surviving copies. Surviving colored versions of De Bry's engravings are rare. See Larry E. Tise, "The 'Perfect' Harriot/De Bry: Cautionary Notes on Identifying an Authentic Copy of the de Bry Edition of Thomas Hariot's *A briefe and true report* (1590)", Appendix A of Robert Fox, ed., *Thomas Hariot and his World: Mathematics, Exploration, and Natural Philosophy in Early Modern England* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016), 201–29, and Peter Stallybrass, "Admiranda narratio: A European Best Seller", in Thomas Hariot, *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia: The 1590 Theodor de bry Latin Edition* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 9–30; esp. 23–4, an introduction to a facsimile of a colored Latin version in the Mariners' Museum in Virginia. (Harvard's Houghton Library has a colored French edition.) Even without coloring, Stallybrass notes that "the 1590 folio was anything but inexpensive" (9).

53 We should admit here the possibility that Strachey spoliated three copies of De Bry's volume whose engravings had already been colored. On the rarity of such editions, see previous note.

“browne, or rather tawnye” color of the Virginians to the application of “redd tempered oyntementes of earth, and the iuyce of certayne scrused rootes, so sone as they ar borne”.<sup>54</sup> Like Captain John Smith, whom he cites here, Strachey believed that the Indians are “from the woumbe indifferent white” – a common belief at the time – but, unlike Smith, he sided with René de Laudonnière and Marc Lescarbot in assuming that the color change as they matured was artificial.<sup>55</sup> For cross-cultural comparisons, Strachey cited first “the Greek-women, how they colloured their faces all over with certayne rootes called Brenthyna” and, inevitably, the ancient Britons: “and as the Britaynes died themselves redd with woad”. Presumably, his notion that woad was red rather than blue was influenced by the “redd termpered oyntements of earth” supposedly used by the Virginians.

In addition to calling attention to the cultural kinship of modern Virginians and ancient Britons, earlier in his *Historie* Strachey devoted considerable attention to the theme of the exemplary civilizing mission of the Romans in Britain. Like the sermons of the 1609–10 campaign for the re-chartered Virginia Company, much of his “Praemonition” was devoted to refuting the objections of those who “through Malice, or Ignorance” expressed doubts about the venture. One such objection, that the English settlement would prove “iniuryous to the naturall Inhabitants”, triggered Strachey’s learned appeal to ancient history.

Had not this violence, and this Injury, bene offred unto us by the Romans, ... even by *Julius Caesar* himself, then by the Emperor *Claudius*, (who was therefore called Britannicus,) and his Captaynes, Aulus Plautius and Vespasian, who tooke in the Isle of Wight. And lastly by the first Lieutenant sent hither Ostorius Scapula (as wrytes Tacitus in the life of Agricola), who reduced the conquered partes of our barbarous Island into Provinces, and established in them Colonies of old soldiers, building castells, and townes and in every Corner teaching us even to know

54 Strachey, *Historie* (Wright and Freund eds.), 70.

55 Cf. John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles ...* (London: Michael Sparke, 1624) Bk. 2, 30. (Strachey was evidently citing a verbal communication); René de Laudonnière, *A Notable Historie Containing foure voyages made by certayn French Captaynes unto Florida*, trans. by Richard Hakluyt (London: Thomas Dawson, 1587), 4 (Bir); Lescarbot (Erondele trans.), Bk 2, Ch. 10, 180. Verbal echoes and the notion that this ointment was a mosquito-repellent show that Strachey was following Lescarbot. For the idea that the Indians were born white, see Alden T. Vaughan, “From White Man to Redskins: Changing Anglo-American Perceptions of the American Indian”, *American Historical Review* 87.4 (1982), 917–53; 925–26.

the powerfull discourse of divine Reason which makes us only men, and distinguisheth us from beasts, amongst whom we lived as naked, and as beastly as they, we might yet have lyved overgrowne Satyrs, rude, and untutred, wandering in the woodes, dwelling in Caves, and hunting for our dynners, (as the wyld beasts in the forrests for their prey,) prostetuting our daughters to straungers, sacrificing our Children to our Idolls, nay eating our owne Children, as did the Scots in those days as recyeth Thomas Cogan....<sup>56</sup>

Strachey's reference to Tacitus's *Agricola* (14.1–2) generally followed the wording of Sir Henry Savile's translation, though he misread Scapula as the first "lieutenant" (*consularis*), when it was in fact Aulus Plautius; and the "castells" (*castella*) were the work of Didius Gallus.<sup>57</sup> The phrase "powerfull discourse of divine Reason" is Strachey's, not Tacitus's, in whose more cynical view, expressed later in the *Agricola*, Rome's gift of civilization (*humanitas*) to the formerly warlike Britons was fundamentally an instrument of control and servitude.<sup>58</sup>

Strachey proceeded to cite Cogan's citation of Jerome on the savagery of the Gauls (*Haven of Health*, Ch. 137, 123) and added his own citation of Bede on the barbarism of the ancient Britons, whose human sacrifices resembled those encountered by the Spanish in the New World (his sources apparently being Peter Martyr of Anghiera and the Jesuit José de Acosta), "and as the Quiyoughquisocks (or Priests) doe to the Idoles of the savages here".<sup>59</sup> Thus, any violence that might unfortunately be visited upon the Virginians would be strictly for their own good:

All the Injury that we purpose unto them, is but the Amendement of those horrible Hethenishnes, and the reduction of them to the aforesaid many dutyes, and to the knowledge, (which the *Romans* could not give us) of that god, who must save both them and us, and who bought us alike, with a deare sufferance, and pretious measure of mercye.

56 Strachey, *Historie*, ed. Wright and Freund, "Praemonition" 24: unresolved open parentheses in the original.

57 Tacitus, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba: Fower Bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus. The Life of Agricola*, 2nd. ed. (London: Bonham and John Norton, 1598), 189.

58 Tacitus, *Agricola* 21.3: "idque apud imperitos humanitas vocabatur, cum pars servitutis esset".

59 Strachey, *Historie*, ed. Wright and Freund, "Praemonition", 25.

The English, then, were doubly blessed. While the Romans were able to bring the wild Britons only the rudiments and trappings of their own vaunted civilization, leaving it to others to spread the Gospel, the English in Virginia were elected to perform both tasks at once – or at least in relatively swift succession.

From May 1612, while Strachey was at work on his *Historie*, to November 1615, the perpetually cash-strapped Virginia Company turned from pious incentives to frank appeals to greed, in the form of a series of lotteries.<sup>60</sup> Two tracts (one based on a letter from Alexander Whitaker, a young parson in Virginia), a promotional ballad, and an eye-catching broadside sporting exhortatory Virginian youths and piles of money and plate all sustained, in their own ways, the “ancient Britons paradigm.”<sup>61</sup>

Though the lotteries were not a ringing success, the affairs of the Virginia Colony had improved somewhat over the next few years, when, in 1621, the “old Britons paradigm” suddenly emerged from its home in the promotional literature of the Virginia Company to become a memorable passage in a major work of English literature: Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*. In the introductory “Democritus to the Reader”, Burton claimed that melancholic disorders are not confined to individuals but can also afflict entire peoples, requiring the “medicine” of firm and wise government, even if this requires the strong arm of foreign invaders and colonizers. For example:

This Island among the rest, our next neighbours the French and Germanes may be a sufficient wnesse, that in a short time by that prudent policy of the Romanes was brought from barbarisme; see but what Caesar reports of us, and Tacitus of those old Germanes, they were once as uncivill as they in Virginia, yet by planting of Colonies, & good lawes, they became from barbarous outlawes, to be full of rich and populous cities, as now they are, & most flourishing kingdomes; and so might Virginia, and those

60 See Robert C. Johnson, “The Lotteries of the Virginia Company, 1612–1621”, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 74.3 (1966): 259–92.

61 Robert Johnson, *The New Life of Virginea* (London: William Welby, 1612): “God that hath many waies shewed mercie to you, make you shew mercie to them and theirs”, E4r; William Crashaw, *Good Newes from Virginia* (London: William Welby, 1613), incorporating Whitaker’s letter: “Oh remember (I beseech you) what was the state of England before the Gospell was preached in our Countrey? How much better were we then ... then these now are?”, (24–5); *Londons Lotterie* (London: Henry Robards, 1612): “Who knows not England once was like / a Wildernesse and Savage place”; *A Declaration for the certaine time of drawing the great standing Lottery* (London: William Welby 1615/1616): “As wee, were Yee till Others Pitie / Sought, and brought You to that Cittie [Jerusalem]”.

wild Irish have been civilised long since, if that measure had beene heretofore taken, which now begins of planting Colonies &c.<sup>62</sup>

Thus, Burton offered the behavior of the Romans in Britain as a useful template for Englishmen dealing with two populations encountered during English expansion: the Virginians and the “wild Irish”.<sup>63</sup>

#### 4 “The Romane Swords Were Best Teachers of Civilitie”: The Roman Model after the Attack of 1622

Burton’s optimistic view of the Virginia venture was outdone the following year in a sermon preached on April 18 by Patrick Copland, a Scottish Presbyterian minister deeply interested in the education of peoples encountered in English mercantile and colonial ventures: *Virginia’s God Be Thanked, Or A Sermon Of Thanksgiving For The Happie successe of the affayres in Virginia this last yeare*. The sermon helped secure Copland the Company’s appointment as rector of the projected Indian college at Henrico on June 3. Alas, a few days later a ship arrived with the news that some weeks before Copland had delivered his sermon Opechancanough had orchestrated a devastating attack on the scattered English settlements, destroying Henrico and all hopes of an Indian college. Unsurprisingly, a new tone emerged in published comments on the natives of Virginia, as is grimly evident in a pamphlet published in August, in which the Company’s Secretary Edward Waterhouse declared that “... the way of conquering them is much more easie then of civilizing them by faire meanes, for they are a rude, barbarous, and naked people, scattered in small companies, which are helps to Victorie, but hinderances to Civilitie”.<sup>64</sup> Drawing eagerly upon Spanish methods, Waterhouse recommended “blood-hounds to draw after them, and mastives to teare them”. To illustrate “the Maxime of the Politician

62 Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford: Henry Cripps, 1621), 50–1; in the edition of Thomas C. Faulkner, Nicolas K. Kiessling, and Rhonda L. Blair (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), this is vol. 1, 74.

63 Use of the Roman exemplum for Ireland goes back to Sir Thomas Elyot’s *Boke named the Governour* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1531), fol. 40. See also Sir Thomas Smith to Sir William Fitzwilliam (1572), cited in Nicholas Canny, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: A Pattern Established 1565–75* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976), 129. More recently (1612), the poet Sir John Davies had appealed to Tacitus’s *Agricola* as a model for English treatment of the Irish: *A Discoverie of the True Causes why Ireland was never entirely Subdued* (London: John Jarrard, 1612), 124–6.

64 Waterhouse, *A Declaration of the State of the Colony and Affaires in Virginia* (London: Robert Mylbourne, 1622), 24.

*Divide et impera*”, Waterhouse offered Cortés’s exploitation of the Tlaxcalans’ hatred for the Aztecs and the Romans’ procedure in conquering Britain: “And by these factions and differences of petty Princes, the Romans tooke their greatest advantage to overcome this Iland of Great Britayne, of which Tacitus sayes, *Ita dum singuli pugnant, universi vincuntur*”.<sup>65</sup> The very different appeals to Tacitus’s *Agricola* by Robert Burton in 1621 and by Edward Waterhouse a year later may serve as an indication of the traumatic effect Opechancanough’s carefully planned attack had upon English views of the Virginia Indians.

This grim shift in tone also marked the last instance in the Virginia literature of the theme of the Romans’ civilizing mission: a marginal note added to the account William Strachey had composed some years earlier of the disastrous voyage of Sir Thomas Gates in 1609–10. Though this *True Reportory* attracted a good deal of attention in manuscript form (William Shakespeare is often assumed to have been one of its readers), it did not see print until 1625 – four years after Strachey’s death, three years after the devastating Powhatan attack, and one year after James I dissolved the Virginia Company and Virginia became a royal colony – when Rev. Samuel Purchas, duly industrious successor to the indefatigable Richard Hakluyt, published it in the ninth book of *Purchas his Pilgrimes* (also known as *Hakluytus Posthumus*).<sup>66</sup> Shortly after the belated arrival of the Gates party in Virginia, Strachey reported, “certaine Indians” pulled one Humfrey Blunt from a canoe on the James river, “led him up into the Woods, and sacrificed him”.<sup>67</sup> This proved a shock to Governor De La Warr, who had been unwilling to engage in any “violent proceeding” against unruly Indians, “thinking it possible, by a more tractable course, to winne them to a better condition”. Strachey’s indictment of De La Warr’s dangerous naiveté inspired Purchas to this sarcastic marginal comment:

*Ad Graecas Calendas* [virtually = “when Hell freezes over”]. Can a Leopard change his spots? Can a Savage remayning a Savage be civill? Were not wee our selves made and not borne civill in our Progenitors dayes? and were not *Caesars Britaines* as brutish as Virginians? The Romane swords were best teachers of civilitie to this & other Countries neere us.

65 Waterhouse, *Declaration*, 25. The Tacitean passage is from *Agricola* 12.2, but the *dum* appears to be intrusive.

66 See Samuel Purchas, ed., *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, Part Four (London: William Stansby for Henrie Featherstone, 1625) Bk. 9, Ch. 6, 1734–58. For Shakespeare’s possible knowledge of it, see Roger A. Strittmatter and Lynne Kositsky’s skeptical *On the Date, Sources, and Design of Shakespeare’s Tempest* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2013).

67 Strachey, *True Reportory* (in Purchas), 1755.



Certain similarities between this marginal note and Strachey's own reference in the *Historie* to "this violence, and this injury ... ofred unto us by the Romans" led Nicholas Canny to assume that Strachey was the author of the marginal note and that he later "developed this theme" in the *Historie*, and this has proved an influential assumption.<sup>68</sup> Others, however, have more plausibly identified Purchas as the author, especially given that other marginal notes are clearly his.<sup>69</sup> Also, while both passages about the Romans in Britain address the propriety of using violence against uncivilized peoples, the marginal note's starker emphasis on "the Romane swords" contrasts with Strachey's rhapsodizing over how the Romans taught the Britons "to know the powerfull discourse of divine reason". The Strachey of ca. 1612 is closer to the Burton of 1621, whose "prudent policy of the Romans" reflects the mood the year before the great attack, than to the bitter tone of the note published three years after that shocking event – a tone fully congruent with pessimistic comments Purchas made in a screed he placed not far after Strachey's *Reportory*: "unnatural Naturals"; "having little of Humanitie but shape ... more brutish than the beasts they hunt", etc.<sup>70</sup>

Apart from Purchas's cynical spin on it, the "ancient Britons paradigm" did not survive the shocking events of March 22, 1622. Even John Donne, who in November of that fatal year preached to the Virginia Company a sermon that was surprisingly humane in its suggestions on how to treat the natives,

68 Nicholas Canny, "England's New World and the Old, 1480s–1630s", in *The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by Nicholas Canny (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 148–69; 154–5. Steven Sarson was clearly dependent on Canny, incautiously presenting both the marginal note in the *Reportory* and the passage from the *Historie* as successive passages in the *Historie* alone: *British America 1500–1800* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), 28 and 46 (n. 11). Hingley used the marginal note, which he attributed to Strachey, as the epigraph for the first chapter of *Recovery of Roman Britain* (17) even deriving the chapter title from it ("Made and not born civill"), adding, "I derive this quote from Canny". The same error will be found in my own recent *Greeks, Romans, and Pilgrims* (66, n. 89), though not in my earlier *Romans in a New World*, 227.

69 Louis B. Wright, ed., *Voyage to Virginia in 1609: Two Narratives: Strachey's "True Reportory" and Jourdain's "Discourse of the Bermudas"* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1965), 89, n. 116; Vaughan, "Early English Paradigms", 55; see also Peter Burke, "America and the Rewriting of World History", in *America in European Consciousness*, ed. by Karen Ordahl Kupperman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 33–51; 42; Rome, *English Embrace*, 74f. For marginal notes manifestly by Purchas, see e.g. (re. Strachey's comment on Summers's account of the coast of the Bermuda) "... his draught which we have not. M. Norgate hath since published an exact map" (1738); and a correction of Strachey's claim that the soil of the Bermuda was unpromising: "Experience hath better shown since ..." (1739).

70 Purchas, "Virginia's Verger", *Pilgrimes*, 4.1813–14.

did not allude to ancient Britons or to the civilizing mission of the Romans.<sup>71</sup> In any case, the days of the Virginia Company were numbered at this point. Furthermore, as Richard Hingley has noted, after the first decades of the seventeenth century interest in Roman Britain entered an eclipse, perhaps due, in part, to “an increased interest in the idea of Saxon origins for the English.”<sup>72</sup> True, the motif was destined to a modest career in the literature of the colonization of New England.<sup>73</sup> Its apogee, though, had been the promotion of the Virginia Company.

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The Roman conquests of Spain and Britain offered some early modern Spaniards and Englishmen a double parallel for their own countrymen's behavior in America. Modern Spaniards and Britons were re-enacting the territorial expansion of the ancient Romans, while at the same time they were coming into contact with peoples who could be – and often were – viewed as cultural kin to their own Iberian and British ancestors. Those Spaniards – primarily members of the Dominican Order – who recognized this cultural kinship employed it to undermine the attempt of other Spaniards to claim that modern Spaniards in the Indies were replicating the civilizing mission that was central to ancient Roman imperial propaganda. In the eyes of these Spanish champions of the American Natives, the behavior of the ancient Romans was a negative exemplum to be disowned and avoided, not an inspiring model to be imitated.

71 Donne, *A Sermon Preached to the Honourable Company of the Virginian Plantation* (London: Thomas Jones, 1622). A brief echo of the motif did surface in a sermon preached before the new king Charles I at the opening of Parliament on July 2, 1625. Lamenting that English travelers to “the Indies, East and West”, were too focused on commerce, Arthur Lake, Bishop of Bath and Wells, observed: “If the Apostles and Apostolicke men had affected our salvation no more, we might have continued to this day such as sometime we were, barbarous subjects of the Prince of darkness ... We should take another course for their conversion, yea the same that was taken for ours”: *Sermons with some Religious and Divine Meditations* (London: Nathaniel Butter, 1629), 217.

72 Hingley, *Recovery of Roman Britain*, 66. For the growth of interest in Saxon ancestry, see Hugh A. MacDougall, *Racial Myth in English History: Trojans, Teutons, and Anglo-Saxons* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1982); Colin Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World 1600–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. Ch. 5; and Karen Ordahl Kupperman, “Angells in America”, in *Writing Race Across the Atlantic World; Medieval to Modern*, ed. by Phillip Beidler and Gary Taylor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 26–50.

73 I have written about the use of the motif in *The Planters Plea* (London: William Jones, 1630) of Rev. John White of Dorchester: *Greeks, Romans, and Pilgrims*, 60–69.

For the English colonial promoters, on the other hand, the double parallel was consistently presented as benign. Modern Englishmen were encouraged to view their countrymen in Virginia as following Roman precedent in bringing “civility” to a people who resembled the ancient Picts and Britons. Thus, for the English colonial promoters, both colonizers and colonized in America replicated a generally anodyne view of the Roman conquest of Britain. The colonizers were acting out the part of new Romans encountering new versions of their own uncivilized ancestors. Thus, the brutal history of the Roman conquest of Spain invoked by the Spanish Dominicans as an anti-model for Spanish behavior in the New World contrasts sharply with the generally benign view of the Roman conquest of Britain and the Romans’ “comfortable yoke” (Camden’s term) employed by the Virginia promoters. In both cases, however, exotic peoples encountered in distant lands brought home to early modern Europeans a vivid awareness of their own exotic ancestors in the distant past.

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# A New England Underworld: The Necropolitics and Necropoetics of *Katabasis* in the *Anarchiad* (1786–87) and Mock Epics of the Early U.S. Republic

Adam J. Goldwyn

## 1 Necropoetics, Necropolitics, and the Ancient Roots of the *Katabasis* Motif

From Odysseus's and Aeneas's journeys to Hades in their eponymous epics to biblical and Christian narratives – most famously in Dante's *Inferno* – the *katabasis*, the trip to the underworld, has been a celebrated and well-established set-piece in epic poetry.<sup>1</sup> In the *Odyssey*, the figures that Odysseus meets there are the great and suffering figures of the distant past – Sisyphus, Tantalus, Oedipus and Jocasta – as well as figures from his own life: Achilles, Agamemnon, Ajax and, most sorrowfully, his mother Antikleia. As Irene de Jong notes, the *katabasis* “episode also continues the theme of the comparison of Odysseus' *nostos* [homecoming] with those of the other Greek veterans of the Trojan War”.<sup>2</sup> From each of these, he learns some lesson about his life or, in understanding their lives, a mirror reflection of the possibilities that await him. Agamemnon, for instance, warns him against trusting his wife; his story thus serves as a foil for Odysseus's own potentially treacherous return to Penelope. Similarly, in Achilles, who now regrets his decision to live a short but glorious life, Odysseus sees the alternate possibilities for his own life, since Achilles died gloriously, while Odysseus is destined to a long life. Dante's underworld, however, was markedly different. For the Florentine poet, the moral verdict on the people he meets in the underworld was far more explicit: Dante populates

1 For a history of *katabasis* in the ancient and medieval traditions, see Gunnel Ekroth and Ingela Nilsson, eds., *Round Trip to Hades in the Eastern Mediterranean Tradition: Visits to the Underworld from Antiquity to Byzantium* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). The tradition of *katabasis* in epic poetry continues, as, for instance, in the visit of Omeros and the narrator to the underworld beneath the volcano of Soufrière in Derek Walcott's *Omeros* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 1993), for which, see Austenfeld, Thomas, “How to Begin a New World: Dante in Walcott's ‘Omeros’”, *South Atlantic Review* 71, no. 3 (2006): 15–28.

2 Irene De Jong, *A Narratological Commentary on the Odyssey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 271.

his underworld with his own personal enemies, and as he gets deeper, their sins and sufferings increase.

As the first citizens of the United States were deeply invested in building a new republic on the Roman model, they turned to Roman epic, and to the convention of *katabasis* to help form their new national literature. For these writers, the underworlds of Homer, Dante, and above all Virgil offered definitive models. When Aeneas enters the underworld, he, like Odysseus before him and Dante after him, sees heroes and villains dead and gone, recently dead companions, and people he knew well in life. But in a unique innovation in the epic tradition of underworld visitations, Aeneas also sees the future of Rome. Over the course of one and hundred thirty lines (*Aen.* 6.756–886), Aeneas's gaze moves from the mythical past to the character's own present to what appears to him to be the future but, which to the Roman audience of the *Aeneid*, appears as their own recent history.<sup>3</sup> That is to say, Aeneas's future is the past and present of the original audience of the *Aeneid*.

For writers in the early United States, adapting the *katabasis* motif was both an aesthetic decision to emulate a particularly well-known generic convention of epic that features poetry about the dead – a necropoetics – and also an ideological one – a foregrounding of political ideals about freedom and revolution through what contemporary theorists call “necropolitics”. The term was invented by Achille Mbembe in his 2003 article of the same name, who defined it as “forms of subjugation of life to the power of death”.<sup>4</sup> In the study of the early United States, the term gained prominence through the work of Russ Castronovo, particularly in his book *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism, and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (2001). For Castronovo, the politics of freedom in the early Republic is a politics of death. Both freedom and death, and freedom as death, are joined in such iconic Revolutionary

3 The overall pessimism of the underworld vision in the *Anarchiad*, too, with its fear of the dissolution of the new nation, echoes similar readings of the *katabasis* in the *Aeneid*, most notably in the tragic figure of Marcellus, the embodiment of the Roman nation who dies at a young age. The so-called “pessimistic school” of Virgilian studies, moreover, saw Aeneas's *katabasis* as a key passage for re-envisioning Virgil as a critic of Augustan imperialism rather than a propagandist: “Vergil seeks justification for Aeneas, not only by time, as Ancestor of the City, but in experience, as the individual who is driven by forces and looks for a personal fulfilment [*sic*] outside and beyond himself. The justification is never found. This failure is what we have already taken to be the central thread of the *Aeneid*, and the episodes quoted above, above all that of the golden bough, like very close to it. [...] The attack begins by assuming conquest; it ends by implying defeat and destruction” Brooks, Robert A. “Discolor Aura. Reflections on the Golden Bough”, *The American Journal of Philology* 74, no. 3 (1953), 279–280: 280.

4 Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics”, *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003), 11–40: 39.

sentiments as Nathan Hale's "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country" and Patrick Henry's "Give me liberty or give me death". Writers of epic and mock-epic in the early Republic used the Virgilian necropoetics of the *katabasis* to describe a vision of citizenship as necropolitics: what does it mean to live and die a free citizen of a free country? This was particularly the case for John Trumbull, David Humphreys, Lemuel Hopkins, and Joel Barlow, four writer-politicians, who, named after the city in which they lived, together were referred to as the Hartford Wits. In mock-epics they composed singly (Trumbull's *M'Fingal* and Barlow's *Columbiad*, Lemuel's *Democratiad*) and collaboratively (the *Anarchiad*), they used the motif of the *katabasis* to make an explicitly political point, warning against plunging the country into an anarchic underworld – or, rather, of bringing that anarchic underworld up into the living Republic.

## 2 Shays's Rebellion and the Discovery of Ancient Epic in the New West

On October 26th, 1786, an article simply entitled "American Antiquities. No. 1" appeared in the *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine*. Its author remained anonymous, identifying himself in the opening sentence only by saying, "I have the felicity to belong to a society of critics and antiquarians, who have made it their business and delight, for some years past, to investigate the ancient as well as natural history of America".<sup>5</sup> The United States had only just achieved independence from Britain three years earlier, and the Treaty of Paris, which formally acknowledged the new nation, had expanded the borders to the Mississippi River: far to the inland west and well beyond the original thirteen coastal territories. There was much interest in these new and relatively unexplored and unknown regions, and the high spirit of inquiry and the lower spirit of unfettered capitalism and economic opportunity sent explorers, naturalists, merchants and adventurers to these new territories.<sup>6</sup> Thus, when the "society of critics and antiquarians" boasts that their members had "favored the public with a minute and accurate description of the monstrous new-invented animal which had, till his elaborate lucubration, escaped the notice

5 Joel Barlow, Lemuel Hopkins, David Humphries, and John Turnbull, *The Anarchiad: A New England Poem* (New Haven: Thomas H. Pease, 1861), 3.

6 For a summary of the many such antiquarian, anthropological, botanical and other kinds of studies of western lands – and in particular the Ohio Company's attempt to lure New Englanders "with descriptions of western curiosities" during the period, see Martinko 2009.

of every zoologist” and that another had “brought them acquainted with a hermit who surpasses all other hermits in longevity, as much as his biographer does all other historians in point of veracity”, among other achievements, the author of the article was embracing intellectual and fiscal trends in the early United States.<sup>7</sup> Thus, for instance, he writes that they have “spared no pains to feast the public curiosity” and “at the same time, [quenched] the thirst for novelty from the burning spring on the Ohio”.<sup>8</sup> “It has happily fallen to my lot”, the author continues, “to communicate, through the medium of your paper, a recent discovery still more valuable to the republic of letters”.<sup>9</sup> Again drawing on the curiosity about the uncolonized land newly encompassed within the borders of the United States, the author notes that he “need scarcely premise the fortifications of ancient civilizations yet visible, and other vestiges of art, in the Western country, had sufficiently demonstrated that this delightful region had once been occupied by civilized people”, adding that “had not this hypothesis been previously established, the fact that I am about to relate would have placed it beyond the possibility of doubt”.<sup>10</sup> He then relates how, while digging in one of these ruins, they found, among other items “more curious than those of Palmyra or Herculaneum” a variety of badly damaged papers which, when treated “by means of a chemic preparation” revealed to the author an epic called “THE ANARCHIAD, a Poem on the Restoration of Chaos and Substantial Night, in twenty-four books”.<sup>11</sup> The section the antiquarian has translated is part of a book of visions in which the poet predicts future events, one among many recognizable epic motifs which, the author notes, “Homer, Virgil, and Milton have borrowed” from the *Anarchiad*.<sup>12</sup> In his study of the dubious accounts of “the West” that circulated in the early Republic, David Shields notes that

7 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 3.

8 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 3–4. About the *Anarchiad* in particular, Martinko argues that “Amid these intellectual pursuits, the western landscape earned the Ohio country a reputation as an extraordinary place. The publication of a mock epic poem, *The Anarchiad*, was one of the first publications to generate this popular image. [...] Despite the poem’s fantastical narrative, the authors grasped the mythic potential of the western landscape and rooted it in their broad concerns about the development of American culture”, Whitney Martinko, “‘So Majestic a Monument of Antiquity’: Landscape, Knowledge, and Authority in the Early National West”, *Buildings & Landscapes: Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum* 16, no. 1 (2009), 29–61: 35.

9 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 4.

10 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 4.

11 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 6.

12 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 5. With these references, McDonald argues that the poem, “Allusive, imitative, derivative, and little else, the *Anarchiad* makes a joke out of its lack of originality. [...] Imagining an ancient Ohio poem could be the lost father-of-all epic convention pokes fun at the very idea of any original American literature”, Will McDonald,

“those persons aspiring to learning in the early republic did so conscious that the new nation lacked the requisites of European learned culture, notably with a national university and an aristocracy capable of patronizing learned inquiry and publication”.<sup>13</sup> The comparison of the *Anarchiad* to the poets of ancient and medieval epic, then, is part of both the new interest in the West and the enduring sense of the cultural inferiority of the United States relative to Old Europe: “To achieve equivalence with the other civil states of the world, the nascent United States had to demonstrate that it could engage in the global conversation that contributed to human understanding”.<sup>14</sup> Yet the poem’s opening lines self-consciously demolish the pseudo-scholarly claim contained in the origin story of the manuscript:

In visions fair the scenes of fate unroll,  
And Massachusetts opens on my soul  
There Chaos, Anarch old, asserts his sway,  
And mobs in myriads blacken all the way  
See Day’s stern port – behold the martial frame  
Of Shays’ and Shattuck’s mob-compelling name.<sup>15</sup>

The prophetic moment the poem describes would turn out to be true; indeed, it occurred on August 29, 1786, about two months before the author translated the poem he had discovered, when Luke Day, Job Shattuck and Daniel Shays marched on the county courthouse in Northampton, Massachusetts to keep it from opening.<sup>16</sup> Protests continued throughout September, and, on October 22, just four days before the first appearance of the *Anarchiad*, the prominent

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“Still Personal: Joel Barlow and the Publication of Poetry in the 1780s”, *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 42, no. 1 (2009), 89–104: 96.

13 David S. Shields, “The Learned World”, in *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790–1840*, edited by Robert Gross and Mary Kelley (University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 247–265: 247.

14 Shields, “The Learned World”, 247.

15 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad* 5.

16 Osborne argues that “the *Anarchiad* poets symbolized the political debates of the 1780s by situating them within a transcendent destiny originating with the discovered poem, a destiny that dictates retroactively the terms of the contemporary political situation”, Jeff Osborne, “Constituting American Masculinity”, *American Studies*, 49, no. 3 (2008), 111–132: 120. Giles further suggests that “it is crucial to recognize the *Anarchiad* does not straightforwardly reject the notion of prophecy, but rather travesties it, opting for a form of negative prophecy whereby the mock-epic poem ingeniously puts time in reverse, parodically locating its ultima Thule back in the time of mysterious classical antiquities”, Paul Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730–1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001): 52–3.

politician and revolutionary James Warren wrote to his fellow Massachusettsan John Adams, then ambassador to Britain: "We are now in a state of Anarchy and Confusion bordering on Civil War".<sup>17</sup> This is almost certainly not the direct source of the title for the *Anarchiad*. The term anarchy, though, did appear frequently in the political writings used to describe the cluster of protests and small-scale violence played out over the next year which we now call Shays's Rebellion.<sup>18</sup>

To modern eyes, Shays's Rebellion seems like a minor incident. Shays was a revolutionary soldier who had fought in the battles of Lexington and Bunker Hill, among the first two engagements of the war. Wounded in battle, Shays resigned his commission and returned to his farm in rural western Massachusetts in 1780. Like so many revolutionary war soldiers, Shays, upon his return, found a judicial summons for unpaid debt, which he could not pay since he had neither been able to work the land nor had he been compensated for his military service. After the war, thousands of poor, former revolutionary soldiers, mostly from rural areas inland, were jailed for such debts. The urban coastal elites, and the politicians beholden to them in cities like Boston, refused to release them. Shays became one of the leading voices for these newly dispossessed, and began organizing protests, preventing courts from sitting so that they could not convict for unpaid debt, and preventing tax collectors from collecting any more money.<sup>19</sup> At the time, however, Shays's Rebellion,

17 *The Adams Papers: Papers of John Adams*, edited by Gregg Lint et al., volume 18 (Cambridge MA: Belknap Press, 2016), 485. The word appears frequently throughout the letters of John and Abigail Adams and their correspondents.

18 In his memoirs, Trumbull himself says that "Had not the insurrection of Shays, in Massachusetts, been speedily crushed, the eastern states would have become a scene of anarchy and confusion", John Trumbull, *M'Fingal, A Modern Epic* (Hartford: S. Andrus and Sons, 1856), 17, and, again, that the uprising created "scenes of anarchy and confusion" which he feared would "involve the country in the horrors of civil war" (Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, 20). The nation's leading men, including George Washington, John Jay, James Madison, and others "keenly felt the need [for a strong federal government] in the face of what they often described as 'madness', 'absurdity', and 'anarchy'", Osborne, "Constituting American Masculinity", 114. For the use of the term by Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Rush, and others in the rhetoric of the early Republic, see Jeremy Engels, "Disciplining Jefferson: The Man within the Breast and the Rhetorical Norms of Producing Order", *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 9, no. 3 (2006), 411–435: 428–431.

19 Richards argues that this "standard story of Shays's Rebellion did not wash. The notion that the Shaysites were poor farmers hopelessly in debt, a notion that appears in scores of scholarly books as well as every American history textbook, accounted for only a minority of the rebels" Leonard Richards, *Shays's Rebellion: The American Revolution's Final Battle* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), x. Though the majority of its participants may not have been indebted farmers, Richards's own research (e.g., 1–7) demonstrates that even contemporary accounts of the Rebellion stressed its origins in a debt

the first armed insurrection since the Revolution, demonstrated the enduring rifts between the urban financial and political elite and the rural agrarian commoner over important issues of national and local self-governance.<sup>20</sup> This rift, coupled with the increasingly apparent political failures of the inadequate Articles of Confederation and the economic inefficiency and financial instability caused by thirteen states each printing their own paper money, led to deep concern among the urban elite.

Among those concerned were the Hartford Wits.<sup>21</sup> Members of the intellectual elite – all were Yale graduates – and staunch federalists, the Wits had front row seats to Shays's Rebellion, which occurred only 25 miles north, in Springfield. The twelve instalments of the *Anarchiad* were published serially from October 26, 1786,<sup>22</sup> just after the outbreak of the Rebellion, until September 13, 1787, four days before the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention which would settle most of the issues over which the Rebellion was fought. The *Anarchiad*, then, was the Wits' response to Shays's Rebellion and the political situation in the US more generally during this period.<sup>23</sup> Though the authorship of only one instalment of the *Anarchiad* has been positively identified (Humphreys claimed to have written Number V, "The Genius of America"), "no one disputes that Humphreys acted as the impresario of the

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crisis, a view shared by the Hartford Wits, for whom the issue of paper money, banking practices and farm debt play a crucial role throughout. Indeed, in a review of the first edition of the collected articles of the *Anarchiad* as a book, published in the *North American Review* in 1861, the author writes that he lives in "an epoch when we are again threatened with disintegration and anarchy", review of the *Anarchiad*, *North American Review* 93 (1861), 587–588. He notes that "It is well known that the interval between the close of the Revolutionary war [*sic*] and the adoption of the Federal Constitution was, in the New England States, a period of general discontent and of numerous conflicts and collisions" which he attributes to "The depreciation of paper money, the lack of employment for the disbanded soldiery, the unsettled state of society consequent on a protracted war, and the preponderant numbers of the debtor class" (587).

20 As his title suggests, this urban/rural divide is at the root of David Szatmary's framing of the war in *Shays' Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980).

21 For an attempt to parse the authorship, see Leon Howard, *The Connecticut Wits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943), 180–183. They are also referred to as the Connecticut Wits as, for instance, in Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections*, William Dowling, *Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), and, Howard, *The Connecticut Wits*.

22 For an attempt to parse the authorship, see Howard, *The Connecticut Wits*, 180–183.

23 An excellent overview and analysis of the place of the work within the broader context of political verse in the early United States, see Colin Wells, *Poetry Wars: Verse and Politics in the American Revolution and Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), especially 113–24.

project”.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, Humphreys commitment to opposing Shays was not merely rhetorical; he commanded a unit of Connecticut troops that had been ordered to suppress the Rebellion, though they were never ordered into combat.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, though the elaborately pedantic pseudo-scholarly prose of the frame tale maintains the pretence of authenticity, the first lines of the poem reveal it to be an elaborate fraud: not a newly discovered work which preceded and influenced successive generations of high epic poets, but rather a mock epic which followed that subgenre’s own conventions of inverting genre conventions.<sup>26</sup> Colin Wells argues that this temporal game “serves the crucial ideological purpose of invoking an extra-historical perspective on such events, ostensibly free of the biases of living inside history. [...] Viewed from the ancient perspective of a fictional narrative whose opposing values are represented as wholly stable, the events of 1786 could thus be represented as a similar story of order overcoming anarchy”.<sup>27</sup>

Drawing on their knowledge of the epic as a genre and their satirical inversion of the conventions of epic poetics and conventions, the authors of the *Anarchiad* included their own *katabasis* in *American Antiquities* XI, published August 16, 1787. The pseudo-scholarly prose passage presents this *katabasis* as an “extract” of Book 17 of the *Anarchiad*. The underworld they describe, entitled “The Land of Annihilation”,<sup>28</sup> is constructed as a hybrid Homeric-Dantean-Virgilian Underworld. As in the Homeric version, the narrator in the Underworld of the *Anarchiad* sees only the great heroes of the past. The authors of the *Anarchiad* use the satirical technique of mock-epic to point, in a Dantean mode of social and political critique, the hypocrisy, selfishness, and pettiness of their contemporaries. From Virgil, they took the idea of using a text set in the distant past to make prophecies about a time which, from the perspective of the characters in the text, is the future, but from the perspective of its immediate audience, the present and, for subsequent readers, the increasingly distant past.

24 Richard Buel, *Joel Barlow: American Citizen in a Revolutionary World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 81.

25 Buel, *Joel Barlow*, 83.

26 Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections*, elaborates further: “*The Anarchiad*, then, is a forgery on two counts: a work of pseudoantiquity, and also a poem that copies from Pope and then tries jokily to allege it is Pope who was the plagiarist. This is particularly ironic in view of the poem’s satirical indictment of what it considers to be fake and fraudulent, notably the circulation of paper money” (50).

27 Wells, *Poetry Wars*, 115.

28 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 64.



### 3 Of Water-Closets and Beer Cellars: Satirical Underworlds in the *Rolliad* (1784) and *M'Fingal* (1775)

The tradition of forged epic has a history near as long and parallel to that of epic – Homer himself was said to have written the *Margites* (about the eponymous fool) and the *Batrachomyomachia* (*Battle of Frogs and Mice*), though only fragments of each survive. The period of the Second Sophistic saw the rise of a forged epic tradition in the form of the wartime journal of Dictys of Crete, an otherwise unknown Greek soldier who had fought in the Trojan War, ostensibly discovered when shepherds stumbled across his tomb after it was jarred open by an earthquake. Written in Phoenician letters, a certain Praxis translated it into Greek, and Lucius Septimius into the Latin by which it is known today. Its counterpart by Dares the Phrygian – a Trojan soldier – was discovered under similarly fortuitous circumstances, as an otherwise unknown Cornelius Nepos tells us in his preface that he discovered the work and translated it into Latin while studying in Athens. This tradition of forged epic made its way into the English Middle Ages as well, when Geoffrey of Monmouth claimed to have found “a very ancient book in the British tongue” which he translated into Latin, while some few hundred years later, Geoffrey Chaucer’s invented Lollius is said to be the source of his own Troy story, *Troilus and Cressida*.<sup>29</sup> But these works were intended to be taken seriously; the invented authority of the found manuscript convention was meant to be accepted as truth by the audience. In the case of the *Anarchiad*, the ploy was meant to be seen through from almost the very start.<sup>30</sup> If there was any doubt, it is put to rest in the prose postscript to the translation, in which the author writes:

I know not whether it is necessary to remark, in this place, what the critical reader will probably have already observed, that the celebrated English poet, Mr. Pope, has proven himself a noted plagiarist, by copying

29 For Lollius, Kittredge’s speculation about his identity a century ago remains a central text for the study of the evolution of thinking about his existence and place within Chaucerian studies, George Lyman Kittredge, “Chaucer’s Lollius”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 28 (1917), 47–133; for Dares and Dictys, see, for instance, Karen Ní Mheallaigh, “Pseudo-Documentarism and the Limits of Ancient Fiction”, *The American Journal of Philology* 129, no. 3 (2008): 403–31 and David Rollo, “Benoît de Sainte-Maure’s *Roman de Troie*: Historiography, Forgery, and Fiction”, *Comparative Literary Studies* 32, no. 2 (1995), 191–225.

30 Though the anonymous 1861 reviewer notes that “Among the more credulous, the fable gained, strange as it may seem, extensive credit” (*North American Review*, 587–588).

the preceding ideas, and even couplets almost entire, into his famous poem called "The Dunciad".

Thus, the work self-consciously calls attention to its position in the tradition of eighteenth century mock epic.<sup>31</sup> Pope originally published the *Dunciad* anonymously in 1728 as an assault on Lewis Theobald, who had come out with an edition of Shakespeare's works with the full title *Shakespeare restored, or, A specimen of the many errors, as well committed, as unamended, by Mr. Pope: in his late edition of this poet. Designed not only to correct the said edition, but to restore the true reading of Shakespeare in all the editions ever yet published*. Though initially a critique of Theobald as the King of the Dunces and chief acolyte of the goddess Dulness, the *Dunciad* expanded its critique to include many other contemporary figures, many of whom became irate when seeing themselves mocked under only the thinnest of disguise. Pope was no doubt inspired by still earlier mock epics, notably Samuel Butler's *Hudibras* (1663), which mocked the various sides in the English Civil War, and John Dryden's *MacFlecknoe* (1682), which posits Dryden's literary rival Thomas Shadwell as a new epic hero: as Odysseus was noted above all for his cunning and Achilles for his wrath, so too Shadwell for his dullness.

The literary revival of the mock epic by Pope led to a variety of such works in both England and North America; indeed, Richmond Bond argues that poems with titles ending in *-iad* or *-ead* are "perhaps the most important vogue in titles in English literature" and that this

is proved by the fact that over two hundred items, nine-tenths of them in verse, may be noted. Several appeared on the heels of the *Dunciad*, and in the seventeen-forties (when Pope was publishing his enlarged and altered version) at least seventeen such works were printed. Thereafter for sixty years there was an average of a score each decade; the eighties marked their greatest popularity, the year 1785 itself containing ten.<sup>32</sup>

The *Anarchiad* was published in 1786, at the peak of this trend, followed by, such works as *The Milkiad* (1789), *The Democratiad* (1795), *The Spunkiad* (1798), and *The Porcupiniad* (1799)[, which] were reshaping their English

31 For Pope's influence on the Hartford Wits, see James Engell, "The Committed Word: Literature and Public Values" (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008), 47 and Giles, *Transatlantic Insurrections*, 49–53, esp. 49–50 for a comparison of the opening lines of the *Anarchiad* to the concluding ones of the *Dunciad*.

32 Richmond Bond, "-iad: A Progeny of the Dunciad", *PMLA* 44, no. 4 (1929), 1099–1105; 1099.

models to the political, social, and cultural concerns of the early republic".<sup>33</sup> In this, the forged epics (and mock epics) shared with their British antecedents a self-conscious attempt to participate in broader debates about history and national identity, politics, and aesthetics. As K.K. Ruthven notes in her study of McPherson's *Ossian* forgeries, for instance, they "were conscripted for a nationalist agenda" that was both "anti-English" by "show[ing] that [...] the Gaels inherited a far more ancient culture than that of the Sassenachs" and "anti-Irish" by showing that "the originating site of Gaelic culture in the third century AD was not Ireland but Scotland".<sup>34</sup>

Thus, for instance, the *Rolliad*, a complex work published by a group of English writers in 1784 which is also the most direct source for the *Anarchiad*, engages with historical visions of England's past and present to engage with political and cultural debates in the author's own time. The work begins by tracing what would ostensibly be the hero of the epic, the Viking Rollo:

When Norman Rollo fought fair Albion's coast,  
(Long may his offspring prove their country's boast!)  
Thy genius, Britain, sure inspir'd his soul  
To bless this Island with the race of Rolle.<sup>35</sup>

The poem, though it begins with a hero of the distant past – and thus a suitable subject for an epic poem – quickly moves past the Viking and comes to the true hero of the story, a contemporary British parliamentarian named John Rolle, chosen ostensibly for his political leanings, but more likely simply because of the suggestive symbolism of his name. The surprising move from a true military conqueror to a minor official most noted for party-line voting is but the first suggestion that this epic is not quite as serious as its elevated rhetoric and rhymed couplets of iambic pentameter might suggest. Indeed, that the poem is not a serious epic at all, but a mock-epic, is suggested by the repeated puns on the name in the opening few lines: "O may thy honour'd name / *Roll* down distinguish'd on the *Rolls* of fame!" in lines 3 and 4, and more farcically, "Hot *Rolls* and butter break the Britain's fast" in line 11.<sup>36</sup> That the poem will

33 Caroline Gelmi, "'The Pleasures of Merely Circulating': Sappho and Early American Newspaper Poetry", *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 69, no. 2 (2014), 151–174: 154 n. 5.

34 K.K. Ruthven, *Faking Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 6–7. Though the book never mentions the *Anarchiad*, its discussion of the role of forgeries as a genre and in the literary and political life of the eighteenth century in particular provides a broader context for the issues discussed in this chapter.

35 *Criticism of the Rolliad, an Epic Poem* (London: J. Ridgway, 1785), 1.

36 *Rolliad*, 1.

not praise Rolle, but rather will mock him, is made clear when, after praising him for possessing “an enlighten’d soul” the poet nevertheless asserts that he “feel[s] one Rolle of Parliament enough”.<sup>37</sup>

The *Rolliad*, moreover, is not an epic in the manner of *MacFlecknoe* or the *Dunciad*; rather than being an actual poem in verse, it purports to be a book of literary criticism about an imaginary epic poem, with extracts included as philological proof of the pseudo-scholar’s interpretations. This alternation between pseudo-scholarly prose and pseudo-epic became the guiding form of the *Anarchiad*. As in the *Anarchiad*, the *Rolliad* too uses the pseudo-scholastic prose sections to draw parallels between it and the ancient epics which came before. In some instances, the author asserts a simple comparison: “Our author now pursues his Hero to the pulpit, and there, in imitation of Homer, [...] gives a labored but animated detail of the Doctor’s personal manners”.<sup>38</sup> More often, however, the pseudo-scholarly critic voices his opinion that the poet of the *Rolliad* is in fact superior to his ancient models:

Mr. Addison has observed, that Virgil falls infinitely short of Homer in the characters of his Epic Poem, both as to their variety and novelty, but he could not with justice have said the same of the author of the *Rolliad*; and we will venture to assert, that the single book of this Poem, now under our consideration, is, in this respect, superior to the whole, both of the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* together.<sup>39</sup>

Elsewhere, the criticism of Homer serves the mock epic purpose of the text, as when his praise of the poet of the *Rolliad* suggests the superiority of his poetry and his epic heroes to those of his ancient sources:

Homer himself yields, in this respect, to our author; for who would not perceive the evident injustice done to the modern bard, if we were to place the wisdom of Ulysses on any competition with the experience of a Pitt; to mention the bully Ajax, as half so genuine a bully, as the bully T – ; if we were to look upon Nestor as having a quarter of the interesting circumlocution of the ambiguous Nugent; to consider Achilles as possessed of half the anger of Rolle.<sup>40</sup>

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37 *Rolliad*, 2.

38 *Rolliad*, 13.

39 *Rolliad*, 59.

40 *Rolliad*, 63.

After continuing in this vein with comparisons of other contemporary figures to Paris, Patroclus, Agamemnon and the Myrmidons, the critic notes that "there is no end to so invidious a comparison; and we will not expose poor Homer to the farther mortification of pursuing it".<sup>41</sup> Though the author here claims to compare favorable contemporary British politicians to ancient Greek heroes, the absurdity of such a comparison makes these claims ironic.<sup>42</sup>

In the *Rolliad*, Rollo is led through that most grim of all underworlds, the British Parliament, by Merlin, where the wizard shows the Norman pirate his descendants, who turn out to be contemporary British politicians, including Pitt, Rolle, and their allies; the scholar summarizes this book through comparison to Virgil: "But the sixth book, in which Rollo, almost despairing of success, descends into a Night Cellar, to consult this illustrious Merlin on his future destiny, is a master-piece of elegance. [...] The Philosopher's magic lanthorn exhibits the characters of all Rollo's descendants, and even of all those who were to act on the same stage with the Marcellus of the piece, the present illustrious Mr. Rolle".<sup>43</sup> This underworld, however, is not the underworld of Homer, Virgil, or Dante; rather, it is the Parliament building itself which, though of course extant in the time of the writing of the *Rolliad*, remains prophecy to Merlin and Rollo: "Maps of the country round Troy have been drawn from the *Iliad*; and we doubt not, that a plan of St. Stephen's [one of the entrances to the Houses of Parliament] might now be delineated with the utmost accuracy from the *Rolliad*. Merlin first ushers Duke Rollo into the lobby; marks the situation of the two entrances; one in front, the other communicating laterally with the Court of requests".<sup>44</sup> The journey continues: "From the lobby, we are next led into the several committee-rooms, and other offices adjoining; and among the rest, Merlin, like a noble Lord, whose Diary was sometime since printed, takes occasion to inspect the water-closets. [...] It was natural for Dante to send his enemies to hell; but it seems strange that our poet should place the writings of his own friends and fellow-labourers in a water-closet. [...] To confess the truth, we ourselves think the apparent singularity of the poet's conduct

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<sup>41</sup> *Rolliad*, 63–4.

<sup>42</sup> Drawing, perhaps, from the kind of aesthetic relativism criticized by David Hume and other 18th century philosophers, as, for instance, in his *Of the Standard of Taste*: "Whoever would assert an equality of genius and elegance between OGILBY and MILTON, or BUNYAN and ADDISON, would be thought to defend no less an extravagance, than if he had maintained a mole-hill to be as high as TENERIFFE, or a pond as extensive as the ocean. [...] it appears an extravagant paradox, or rather a palpable absurdity, where objects so disproportioned are compared together", *Four Dissertations* (London: A. Millar in the Strand, 1757), 230–1.

<sup>43</sup> *Rolliad*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Rolliad*, 23.

on this occasion, may be reality ascribed to that independence of superior genius".<sup>45</sup> Here, again, the author of *Criticisms* conceives of a different kind of underworld – a toilet – and uses this as a means of mocking both epic convention and, by extension, contemporary politics.

On the other side of the Atlantic, the *Dunciad* influenced a young poet by the name of John Trumbull, who would grow up to become one of the Hartford Wits. Born in 1750, the precocious youth passed the qualifying exams for entrance to Yale at age seven, but, on account of poor health, did not enter for another six years. During this time, as he himself says in a biographical sketch preceding the text of *M'Fingal*, he taught himself Greek and Latin; his principal influences in English letters were, "*The Paradise Lost*, Thompson's *Seasons*, with some of the poems of Dryden and Pope".<sup>46</sup> We may presume that *MacFlecknoe* and the *Dunciad* were among these works, as Trumbull published, in 1772, a verse satire entitled *The Progress of Dulness*, a critique of the educational system whose title alludes to the mock epic of the previous authors. From August 7–15, 1775, a few months after the opening shots of the American Revolution were fired, Trumbull published serially in the *Connecticut Courant* what can justifiably be called the first epic of the United States – *M'Fingal, A Modern Epic Poem. Or The Town-Meeting*. M'Fingal – whose name alludes both to Dryden's protagonist and, as the text itself makes clear, to Fingal, the epic hero of James McPherson's *Ossian*,<sup>47</sup> is a Scottish Loyalist in the years preceding the American Revolution, and he often comes off the worst in debates with his rival Honorius, a thinly-veiled John Adams.<sup>48</sup>

This work contains the first katabasis in what would become the United States. Trumbull describes M'Fingal as having the "Scottish gift of second-sight":

No ancient Sybil, famed in rhyme,  
Saw deeper in the womb of time;  
No block in old Dodona's grove  
Could ever more orac'lar prove.<sup>49</sup>

Defeated by Honorius/Adams in mock epic debate, M'Fingal is tarred and feathered, a typical way in which revolutionaries in the United States punished

45 *Rolliad*, 16–18.

46 Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, 9.

47 For the influence of *Ossian* on *Fingal* and the *Anarchiad*, see Valentina Bold, "Rude Bard of the North': James Macpherson and the Folklore of Democracy", *The Journal of American Folklore* 114, no. 454 (2001), 464–77: 471.

48 Trumbull was a personal friend of Adams.

49 Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, 24.

unwelcome British loyalists, but which here turns the prophet figure into a monstrous mock-harpy. Undeterred, however, he rallies his men at the end of Canto 3, telling them

To muster at our usual meeting;  
There my prophetic voice shall warn 'em  
Of all things future that concern 'em,  
And scenes disclose on which, my friend,  
Their conduct and their lives depend.<sup>50</sup>

Here Trumbull promises the same sort of prophetic mode used by Homer in the *Odyssey* and Virgil in the procession of heroes in the *Aeneid*. And, indeed, the opening of Canto 4 finds them gathered underground:

On cautious hinges, slow and stiller,  
Wide oped the great M'FINGAL'S cellar,  
Where safe from prying eyes, in cluster  
The Tory Pandemonium did muster.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, in typical mock epic fashion, the underworld is converted from some metaphorical distant place where only true heroes can go into a literal everyday place available to everyone: no distant hell, but rather, the basement. A note to the text adds that "secret meetings of the Tories, in cellars and other lurking places, were frequent during the revolutionary war".<sup>52</sup>

Further description of this underworld scene elaborates on its mockery of epic conventions:

Their chiefs all sitting round descried are,  
On kegs of ale and seats of cider;  
When M'FINGAL, dimly seen,  
Rose solemn from the turnip-bin.<sup>53</sup>

Again Trumbull fuses the high literary with the mock epic: a note at the bottom in Latin identifies the seated council as analogous with the divine council on Olympus in Virgil, though here the characters sit not on celestial benches

50 Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, 128.

51 Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, 128.

52 Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, 129.

53 Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, 130.

fashioned by the gods, but rather on the everyday real world items in a revolutionary era New England cellar: kegs of beer and cider. Trumbull's mockery persists when M'Fingal, "in feather'd majesty before 'em", rises from the turnip bin to speak.<sup>54</sup> The poem ends when M'Fingal's prophecy of the victory of the United States, which he describes as a "sight hateful and tormenting, / This Rebel Empire, proud and vaunting", is interrupted when a group of revolutionary Whigs find the pro-British Tories' underground hiding place and, as Aeneas defeats Turnus and the Latins, rush in and defeat the Tories in a farcical battle. M'Fingal beats a hasty and unseen retreat by crawling out a window. Though some critics have found a careful reading of the poem to suggest more ambivalence than rank patriotic partisanship, John McWilliams notes that because "the ignominy of the Tory is kept at the forefront, his poem was understandably read as a goad to Whig commitment. Its display of the brutalities of popular excess provided quotations for Republican as well as Federalist newspapers for years".<sup>55</sup> Though the question of authorial intention can never be parsed with certainty, and though the political aspects of *M'Fingal* may be more nuanced than in other mock-epics, McWilliams's partisan political commitments reveal a strongly anti-British sentiment, and the work itself serves nevertheless as a model for mock-epic as a vehicle of classical reception for contemporary political polemic.

#### 4 The Land of Annihilation: *Katabasis* in the *Anarchiad*

Thus, the outbreak of Shays's Rebellion provided the subject matter for a work of social criticism, while the nearly simultaneous publication of the *Rolliad* provided a formal structure that could be easily adapted by an experienced mock-satirist like Trumbull. The prose section introducing the "Land of

54 Trumbull, *M'Fingal*, 130.

55 John McWilliams, *The American Epic: Transforming a Genre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 78. For Trumbull's ambivalent reputation, see Alexander Cowie, "John Trumbull as Revolutionist", *American Literature* 3, no. 3 (1931), 287–95: "It has been customary to refer to John Trumbull as if he were a flaming revolutionist of the same stripe as Paine or Freneau and to credit him with an all-absorbing love of country which impelled him to write his greatest poem, *M'Fingal*" (287). After a survey of late C19th and early C20th scholarly attitudes, Cowie argues that "Inasmuch as Trumbull sided with the Colonies against the Crown, it is perhaps natural to assume hastily that his motives in writing the pome were purely patriotic and he wrote it spontaneously in a mood of fierce indignation. Yet a closer examination of *M'Fingal* leads to the belief that although Trumbull by no means harbored Loyalist opinion as definitely as Crèvecoeur, he was far from a bigoted Whig even at the outbreak of the Revolution" (287).



Annihilation” extract of the poem begins with a literary critical outline of the significance of the supernatural in epic poetry and the particular importance of the descent motif, noting that the works of “Homer, Virgil, and Milton are indebted to this machinery for the brightest ornaments” and that “the reader who slumbers over historical narration, finds himself animated by the gods of Homer, the enchantments of Tasso, and the ghosts of Ossian”.<sup>56</sup> The *Anarchiad*, they write, being “so sublime, regular and complete”, must therefore also have such a motif, and the authors find it interesting for two equally absurd reasons. First, in line with their pseudo-antiquarian interest, because nothing could “be more curious and entertaining than the ideas of the early inhabitants of this land, concerning the wonders of the invisible world”, and second, because of how “closely he has been followed (as, indeed, might naturally be expected) by Homer, Virgil, and the their successors in modern ages”.<sup>57</sup> The authors again play with the time scale, positioning the *Anarchiad* more clearly as the source rather than the satirical descendant of the preceding epic tradition. Acknowledging this mockery, the introductory prose section concludes by suggesting that the “nihility” of the denizens of “Land of Annihilation might pass for a burlesque, if it were not found in so serious a performance”.<sup>58</sup> The verse passage itself paints an underworld drawn from both Dante and Greek myth:

Beyond the realms where stygian horrors dwell,  
And floods sulphureous overwhelm the vales of hell;  
Where Naiad furies, yelling as they lave,  
In fiery eddies roll the turbid wave:

Beyond the verge of chaos' utmost clime,  
The dubious bounds of nature, space, and time;  
A realm extends its unessential gloom,  
The vast creation's universal tomb!<sup>59</sup>

The population of the underworld is also described in terms that emphasize its hellish nature: “The peerless *power*, ANNIHILATION, reigns! *Eldest of fiends!*” over ten thousand demons.<sup>60</sup> There, too, are found “the pigmy populace of the nether sky”, imps, “veiled in human guise”, whose

56 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 64–65.

57 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 65.

58 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 65.

59 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 65.

60 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 66.

humble province is to plague mankind,  
 Pervade the world, excite all mortal strife,  
 Inspire the wrongs, and blast the joys, of life.<sup>61</sup>

The politics of necro citizenship are also evident in the variety of unpopular professions with whom the Wits populate their underworld: among these evil creatures are included doctors who “With deadly art pursue[] the healing trade” and “O’erload the stygian bark with frequent freight”.<sup>62</sup> One also finds preachers who “Ope heaven for self, and doom the rest to hell” and lawyers who “Confound[] all right, and, arrogant in lies, / Spread[] a dark mist before the judge’s eyes”.<sup>63</sup> Attacking doctors was itself a trope of the literature of the early Republic; Maureen Tuthill, for instance, notes that “doctors in the early American novel are typically portrayed in one of two ways: as quacks who prey on an ignorant populace or as members of the new intelligentsia who save the people from themselves”.<sup>64</sup> What joins these two professions are their proximity to death: doctors are those who forestall death, while preachers are those who prepare people for it. By portraying them as quacks and charlatans, the poem shows the dangers of a necropolitics that fetishizes death as a form of freedom.

Special animosity, however, is reserved for politicians, who “Formed, like balloons, by emptiness to rise / On pop’lar gales, to waft them through the skies”.<sup>65</sup> As its fear of demagogic politicians preying on the ignorance of the masses suggests, the Land of Annihilation is more than just an aesthetic hellscape; it is where the Hartford Wits’ fears of Shays’s Rebellion and its associated political and economic program are embodied. They fear and condemn what they refer to as the “young democracy of Hell” before which, implicating the weakness of the Articles of Confederation, “the *powers of Congress* fade” and, in light of the economic concerns of Shays and his followers, “*public credit* sinks, an empty shade”.<sup>66</sup>

The passage then moves to even more specific complaints, populating the underworld with thinly-disguised contemporary historical figures whom the authors wish to condemn. In particular, the underworld passage is a response to the Connecticut ratifying convention for the Constitution. On

61 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 67.

62 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 67.

63 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 68.

64 Maureen Tuthill, *Health and Sickness in the Early American Novel: Social Affection and Eighteenth-Century Medicine* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 147.

65 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 68.

66 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 69.

October 19, the Connecticut assembly declared that delegates to the state ratifying convention would be selected on November 12. In a vote in Hartford on January 9, 1788, the convention voted to ratify. “American Antiquities XI”, published on August 16, 1787, was the Wits’ contribution to the political debates leading up to these decisive dates; their underworld is inhabited by their anti-federalist enemies:

The Lybian LION shrinks before the LAMB!  
New modes of taxing spring from *Woglog’s* hands,  
And peerless *Wimble* sells the western lands!

The reference to the “Lybian Lion” [*sic*] evokes the phrase used in Dryden’s translation of the *Aeneid* 12.9, where it is a reference to Turnus, betrayed by the fleeing Latins.<sup>67</sup> The Lamb is John Lamb, chairman of the Federal Republican Committee of New York, an important centre of anti-federalist activity. Woglog is a reference to Erastus Wolcott, an anti-federalist who advocated the shifting of the tax burden from farmers to the urban merchant and professional class. Wimble is William Williams, a Connecticut delegate to the Continental Congress and signatory of the Declaration of Independence; Williams was also an anti-federalist and relation by marriage to Trumbull.<sup>68</sup> Along with George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and other prominent revolutionaries, Humphreys and Barlow were founding members of the Society of the Cincinnati, a group which sought to preserve the revolutionary ideals. Williams was a fierce opponent of the Society, which, as the *Anarchiad* suggests, he saw as attempting to sell lands properly belonging to the state of Connecticut. His private correspondence fell into the hands of the Hartford Wits, who made it public and mocked it in what has come to be called the “Wimble War”, a series of mocking letters published in Hartford newspapers.<sup>69</sup>

Later, the underworld traveler notes that “down the dark deep, in friendly union, flows / *Tweedle’s* soft verse, and *Copper’s* sounding prose”, thus introducing new characters to be satirized. Though Tweedle is an as yet unidentified or possibly fictional figure, Copper refers to Joseph Hopkins, another anti-federalist. These together are grouped as “Wronghead” in the poem, a name whose lack of subtlety suggests the strong politics of the poem itself. At

67 The source passage is at 12.6 in the Latin; Dryden adds the adjective “Lybian”, which does not appear in Virgil, for metrical reasons.

68 Williams also briefly owned the indenture of William Apess, the Pequot who was the first Native American to write an autobiography. Apess’s engagement with the Classics is the subject of Matthew Duquès’s chapter in this volume.

69 For the “Wimble Wars”, see Wells, *Poetry Wars*, 120–3.

the Constitutional Convention, both Williams and Hopkins defected from the anti-federalists and voted to ratify.<sup>70</sup> Though it is possible that they read the *Anarchiad*, it is harder to imagine that they were swayed by a satirical article in a local newspaper. More likely, however, is that the *Anarchiad* was the embodiment, in mock-epic and satirical form, of a host of far more serious arguments and attempts at persuasion directed towards Williams, Hopkins, and other anti-federalists throughout the Constitutional Convention. If, as Castronovo argues, “the afterlife emancipates souls from passionate debates, everyday engagements, and earthly affairs that animate the political field”, then the Wits’ articulation of this underworld suggests that not even death can sever the obligations of citizenship.<sup>71</sup>

The final instalment of “American Antiquities”, published on September 13, 1787, continues the journey through the underworld. Guided by “the Merlin of the West” – a subtle connection to both the *Rolliad* and to the broader mythology of the English tradition – the “American bard” goes through the underworld, which would later be “copied by the famous Italian poet, *Dante*, in his ‘Inferno’.” The American bard seems to have been the first who entered the REGION OF PREEXISTENT SPIRITS, which has since been explored by the unnamed narrator, celebrated voyager, *Ænas*, whose observations may be found in the Sixth Book of Virgil.<sup>72</sup> This time, however, instead of mocking their anti-federalist enemies in the United States, the authors take their aim at Europe and European attitudes towards the newly independent country and its more generally. For instance, “The *Abby Mably* is mentioned with particular respect. Nor is a just tribute of praise denied to the modest *Target*, who, supposing that no laws existed in the United States, ...”. In the language of pseudo-praise which marks the genre, the Wits use the language of heroism to describe people they deplore:

From the same *amor patriæ* which has animated poets in all ages, the seer and the bard have dwelt with peculiar pleasure on those great writers who were destined to spend their lives and lucubrations, and to invent so many curious theories, both in philosophy and history, for demonstrating the debility and diminution of nature in the western hemisphere, and for belittling the great objects on which they were to treat, to the level

70 Jackson Turner Main, *The Antifederalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781–1788* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 199. Giles identifies Wronghead as General James Wadsworth, “a leading Connecticut anti-Federalist” (*Transatlantic Insurrections*, 60).

71 Russ Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism, and the Public Square in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), 4.

72 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 71.

of European comprehension. He beholds, with admiration, the souls of those learned sages to whom we are since indebted for the discovery that in this part of the globe the animal and vegetable creation are far inferior to the productions of the eastern continent; that man has wonderfully degenerated in courage, activity, and other marks of virility; and that 'America has never produced one good Poet, one able Mathematician, or one man of Genius in one single Art, or one single Science', as the sagacious *Abbe Raynal* has wisely observed.<sup>73</sup>

This last accusation no doubt particularly galled the Hartford Wits, several of whom had literary aspirations of their own beyond the satirical mock-epic in which their complaint occurred. Thus, various French and English critics of America come under review, each derided for considering America economically weak, lawless, or culturally backward. Here the payoff for the *Anarchiad*'s temporal game becomes highly relevant, for now it becomes clear that, rather than America being forced to copy the culture of Europe, the "discovery" of the *Anarchiad* "proves" that the highest culture of Europe – Homer, Virgil, Dante, Dryden – had in fact been copying America.

Ultimately, however, *The Anarchiad* did prove prophetic in its own way: the epic genre would continue to flourish on neo-Classical models throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries. Joel Barlow would turn his *Visions of Columbus* – published in 1787, the same year as the conclusion of the *Anarchiad* – into the *Columbiad* (1807), a grand-scale epic of the formation of the United States along imperial lines; his fellow Wit Lemuel Hopkins followed, on a much smaller scale, with his own *Democratiad, A Poem, in Retaliation, for the Philadelphia "Jockey Club"* (1795), which sought to secure the Jay Treaty with Britain.<sup>74</sup> The *Columbiad* and similar works, such as Richard Emmon's 1827 *Iliad*-inspired epic the *Fredoniad, or Independence Preserved*, about the War of 1812, have not always fared well, either in their own time or recently. For instance, a contemporary reviewer of the *Fredoniad*, which the modern scholar Charles Squier argues "undoubtedly represents the contemporary reception", writes that readers must be "delighted with the power that can so felicitously render any subject so ludicrous. But take the whole mass together, it is the most monstrous collection of maudlin, silly and incongruous verses, that ever were, or, we hope, ever will be put together".<sup>75</sup> In the preface to

73 Barlow et al., *Anarchiad*, 72.

74 On this, see Wells, *Poetry Wars*, 5–7.

75 Charles Squier, "Dulness in America: A Study in Epic Badness: *The Fredoniad*", *American Literature* 32, no. 4 (1961), 446–454: 447.

the *Fredoniad*, Emmon had noted that his work, “like new wine”, will get better with age and that he hopes for better reviews “fifty years in advance”, though the future has been no kinder than the past.<sup>76</sup> This critical condemnation was perhaps a blow to Barlow and Emmon, who had hoped for literary immortality by becoming Homers of the United States. Though the authors of the *Anarchiad* would surely not have objected to their work having widespread circulation and enduring fame, the goal of their work, unlike Barlow’s and Emmon’s, was far more modest; that it was published in a small local newspaper suggests that it was meant to be ephemeral: a work narrow in scope both in terms of time and audience. From this perspective, the work must be considered a success.

The elaborate intertextual relationship with both epic poetry and pedantic scholarship were marshalled for a narrow and specific political aim: to identify the dangers inherent in the rationale for Shays’s Rebellion and to advocate for Federalist policies which they believed would prevent such outbreaks in the future. That the last issue of the *Anarchiad* was published the same week as the conclusion of the Constitutional Convention was no coincidence: the political debate in which the poem had participated had been decided, and in favor of the position advocated by the *Anarchiad*. With a strong Constitution enshrining centralized power and social order, the threat of anarchy and necropolitics was defeated. As Castronovo notes, “Death obviates substance, liberating freedom from bodies that give flesh to responsibility, family, and, above all, remembrance”.<sup>77</sup> Thus, the necropolitics of the *Anarchiad* are rejected by the anti-Federalists whom the Hartford Wits opposed: the ratification of the Constitution shows the way for a politics of life and order rather than a politics of death and anarchy. Shays and his followers are characterized as those who seek freedom from responsibility, but also, in choosing to call their underworld the Land of Annihilation and then describing the people they find there, the Wits refuse to let even Death release them from their obligations to the new nation. Freedom, in their view, was canonized not as a severing of the ties that bound citizens and thus created a politics of endless bloody revolution, but as an unchanging concept within the well-regulated bounds of a politics of law. The function of the work as a political document had been obviated, thus extinguishing the spark which had animated its literary inventiveness.

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76 Squier, “Dulness in America”, 447.

77 Castronovo, *Necro Citizenship*, 45.

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## “Familiar Commerce”: The Classical Origins of John Winthrop’s “Modell” of American Affiliation

Ivy Schweitzer

... the friend is another himself.

ARISTOTLE, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VIII, 30

...

All flesh consorteth according to kind, and a man will cleave to his like.

Ecclesiasticus 13

∴

In recent years, scholars have explored how “nation” emerges not from particular “state dictates” or political theories but through the rhetoric of its important early polemical writers and their strategic evocation of potent emotions.<sup>1</sup> An important precursor of such an emotional collectivity for the emerging United States, according to Peter Coviello, is John Winthrop’s famous address “A Modell of Christian Charitie”, delivered in the spring of 1630 to a band of Protestant dissenters on the eve of their departure to establish a purified commonwealth in North America.<sup>2</sup> In this address, Coviello notes that Winthrop

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1 A longer version of this essay first appeared in PERFECTING FRIENDSHIP: POLITICS AND AFFILIATION IN EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE by Ivy Schweitzer. Copyright © 2007 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher. [www.uncpress.org](http://www.uncpress.org).

2 The occasion of its delivery is still in dispute. Hugh Dawson argues against the widely held belief that Winthrop first delivered the sermon during the sea crossing, mounting evidence that he delivered it at the point of embarkation in Southampton, England, and considers the implications of its “English context”; see “John Winthrop’s Rite of Passage: The Origins of the ‘Christian Charitie’ Discourse”, *Early American Literature* 26 (1991): 219–31 and “‘Christian Charitie’ as Colonial Discourse: Rereading Winthrop’s Sermon in Its English Context”, *Early American Literature* 33 (1998): 117–49. See also Daniel T. Rodgers, *As a City on a Hill: The Story*

emphasizes the “agonizing affection” he feels for his soon-to-be-missed English brethren, an emotion Thomas Jefferson invokes at the dramatic climax of his initial version of the *Declaration of Independence*.<sup>3</sup>

But Coviello is only partially correct in highlighting the “agonizing” aspect of affection. Rather, Winthrop spends most of his rhetorical capital elaborating a form of Christian love and fellowship that Abram van Engen identifies as “sympathy”, a pervasive Puritan principle, he argues, we have left out of historical accounts of Puritan thinking. Expanding on this claim, Van Engen reinforces a minority argument, advanced by Winthrop’s most recent biographer, Francis Bremer, that the significance of Winthrop’s sermon lies not in its exceptionality but “in its typicality, its commonplace culling together of basic Puritan and early modern beliefs, including the principle of sympathy”. He traces the history of sympathy in ancient Greek thought from the pre-Socratic philosopher Empedocles (c. 495–435 BCE), who grounded his entire philosophical system in one central idea he believed irradiated the universe: *like attracts like*, to the Hellenistic Stoics’ arts of healing. Van Engen then shows how Erasmus and Calvin borrowed this principle from the fields of physics and medicine and applied it to both natural history and moral philosophy, where it influenced Christian humanism and the Reformation. Essentially, these early modern thinkers merged the discourses of science and sentiment through “the metaphor of the body”, until sympathy entered English discourse “as a social requirement and godly duty concerned with human relations”. This principle, Van Engen concludes, pervades Winthrop’s “visionary-yet-commonplace sermon” and “would dramatically affect the social and cultural landscape of seventeenth-century New England”.<sup>4</sup>

An important part of this history that Van Engen ignores, however, is the origin of ideas of sympathy in classical Greek and Roman thought, specifically in discourses of likeness or similarity. I will argue that Winthrop’s vision of sympathy is indissolubly entangled with classical, early Christian, and Renaissance discourses of friendship and – more surprisingly – with the legal

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of *America’s Most Famous Lay Sermon* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018) and Abram Van Engen, *City on a Hill: A History of American Exceptionalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020).

3 Peter Coviello, “Agonizing Affection: Affect and Nation in Early America”, *Early American Literature* 37, no. 3 (2002): 439–68, 462.

4 Abram C. Van Engen, *Sympathetic Puritans: Calvinist Fellow Feeling in Early New England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 25–26, 39–49. Van Engen also discusses this sermon in “Origins and Last Farewells: Bible Wars, Textual Form, and the Making of American History”, *NEQ* 86, no. 4 (2013): 543–92.

language of contract to which these give rise.<sup>5</sup> As Laurie Shannon observes about early modern English culture, the "similitude" or "utopian parity" of "the other-self logics of friendship" is necessary for what emerging contract law calls a 'meeting of the minds'. "Equality between agreeing parties suggests a balance of wills, and only that parity can ensure that a contract has been freely entered".<sup>6</sup> We should note, however, that such "utopian parity" did not at this time include women or people of color, although colonists and conquerors used discourses of friendship and the commercial relations they underwrote.<sup>7</sup> While Winthrop uses the language of Ecclesiasticus, cited above, which is a restatement of Empedocles's central principle, the notion of "likeness" can be very slippery. Does "like" denote the likeness of classical Greek or Roman or Renaissance notions of same-sex friendship (one soul in two bodies), or early modern ideas of marriage (two souls becoming one flesh), or practices of tribal kinship, sectarian uniformity, similarity of class status, or something else?

Taking advantage of this instability, I argue that Winthrop recommends to his followers a form of exchange he extols as "a most equall and sweete kinde of Commerce".<sup>8</sup> A close examination of the sources and dynamics of Winthrop's "charitie" reveals the imbrication of friendship, understood as social and spiritual affiliation, and commercial relations. It also discloses the strategic slip-page characteristic of early Protestant culture between the homonormative logic of friendship and the heteronormative logic of marriage. This association of social and commercial models with modes of affiliation illustrates how cultural institutions such as friendship and marriage can be used to naturalize

5 For an overview of the uses of Greek and Roman thought in early New England culture, see David Lupton, *Greeks, Romans, and Pilgrims: Classical Receptions in Early New England* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).

6 Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 39.

7 The classical notion of friendship as likeness came into play in the famous debate in Valladolid in 1550–51 when Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, a translator and champion of Aristotle, argued that the *non-likeness* of Spaniards and Amerindians was a compelling factor in favor of conquest and conversion. See David Lupton account in his essay in this collection titled "Romans in Spain and Britain as Models and Anti-Models for New World Encounters". John T. Gilmore's translation of John Almey's account of "The South Sea Trade", also in this collection, provides a good example of the commercial aspect of this imperial rhetoric, which clothes conquest and tribute as friendship and commerce. Almey tells how "the Indians bring to the Britons precious gifts, a pledge of friendship, and a magnificent present is prepared for conquering [queen] Anna. A savage race sings what a woman has done, and with their untutored praises celebrating Anna, darling of the North, Commerce chooses to be joined, promising herself new honors to arise from thence" (ll. 66ff.).

8 Winthrop, *Winthrop Papers*, 2: 291. All subsequent citations, abbreviated as *WP* and given parenthetically, are from this edition.

gender differences and inequality.<sup>9</sup> The vision of a diverse “commonwealth” united by common beliefs and moral values may have had a radical, even democratic tinge in Winthrop’s day. But this vision ratifies a conservative social agenda, drawn in part from its classical origins, in which women are the “equals” of men in neither marriage nor friendship.

## 1 Classical Contexts of “Charitie”

Winthrop based his famous “modell” for the “Citty upon a Hill” he envisioned in New England on an understanding of Christian “love” denoted by “charity”. This “love” is a translation of the original Greek *agape*, which early church fathers called Christian “brotherhood” or “fellowship”. The Vulgate renders this form of affiliation as *caritas*, while the Geneva and King James Bibles translate it variously as “love” and “charity”.<sup>10</sup>

What emerges from the scholarly debate over nomenclature is an understanding of Christian *agape* and *caritas* that is tangled up in the shifting and diverse meanings of the ancient Greek term *philotes* and the *philia* and *amicitia* of later Greek and Roman philosophers, not to mention the other prominent human affect the Greeks called *eros*.<sup>11</sup> Classicist David Konstan argues that Christian writers generally preferred metaphors derived from kinship relations (brothers, father-son) to distinguish spiritual and universal love from the particular, worldly though ideal affiliation often denoted by *philia* and *amicitia* and from the irrational passion of *eros*.<sup>12</sup> Historian Carolinne White counters that due to the classical training and sensibility of early Christian writers, “in reality the two [sets of] terms not only overlap in meaning to a large extent but

9 Zubenda Jalalzai examines a similar tension between hierarchical “corporeal models” and “egalitarian contractual models” of community in Winthrop’s address with respect to Puritan attitudes towards racial difference and shows how the latter model invited Indians into the Puritan covenant while the former excluded Indian converts on the basis of their unassimilable “corporeal identities”. See “Race and the Puritan Body Politic”, *MELUS* 29 (Fall/Winter 2004): 259–72, 265.

10 For example, in the passage from 1 Corinthians 13 cited in the next paragraph, the *King James Bible* uses the word “charity” while the *Geneva Bible* uses the word “love” in the main text and “charity” in the marginal commentary.

11 For a summary of the scholarship on “nomenclature and interpretation of conceptions of friendship” in the Greco-Roman periods, see Heather Devere, “Reviving Greco-Roman Friendship: A Bibliographic Review”, *The Challenge to Friendship in Modernity*, eds. Preston King and Heather Devere (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 2000): 149–87, 153–155.

12 David Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 156–57.

are often used interchangeably". As evidence, White cites John Chrysostom's use of *philia* in referring to Matthew 22:37–40 where Jesus sums up his teachings for the wily Pharisees in two commandments to love, first, "the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind", and second, "thy neighbor as thyself". The common element in these sets of terms is a "liking" based on or achieving "likeness", a sympathy that all too easily slips into notions of sameness and often underlines exclusive understandings of equality. Although the Christian pair *agape/caritas* differs from the Classical pair *philia/amicitia* at least during the fourth century, in the period White scrutinizes, "the two appear to merge in certain respects, with the result that friendship could be regarded as part of love of God rather than love of something merely mortal".<sup>13</sup>

The apostle Paul gives a source for these kinds of "love" in his first letter to the Corinthians, from which Winthrop draws extensively for the imagery of this address. Paul concludes his frequently cited passage on love by asserting that of the three "gifts" available to believers – faith, hope, and charity – "the greatest of these is charity" (13:13). The Geneva Bible's marginal commentary, paraphrasing verse 10, explains that while faith and hope are promises that will be fulfilled on earth, charity "ceaseth not in the life to come, as the rest doe, but is perfected and accomplished".<sup>14</sup> In other words, charity is not just a human affection, it is also divine; moreover, its exercise on earth provides a foretaste of heaven.

The adjective Paul uses to describe this love, *teleios* (perfected, complete), is the same word Aristotle employs to describe the highest form of *philia*, a "perfect" friendship based on virtue and mutuality that obtains between brothers or military comrades who hold all in common and give their lives for each other.<sup>15</sup> Cicero uses a similar phrase in *De amicitia*, his dramatic dialogue on friendship in the Roman Republic, when his speaker Laelius says of his incomparable friend Scipio, "we shared the one element indispensable to friendship, a complete agreement [*summa consensio*] in aims, ambitions, and attitudes".<sup>16</sup>

13 Carolinne White, *Christian Friendship in the Fourth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 54–55.

14 Geneva Bible, *The Annotated New Testament 1602 Edition*, ed. Gerald T. Sheppard (New York: The Pilgrim Press, 1989), 86.

15 Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea. The Basic Works of Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941): 935–1126 8:9, 13. See Michael Pakaluk's most recent translation of *Nicomachean Ethics, Books VIII and IX* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), which uses the word "complete" to describe "the friendship of good people alike in virtue" (1156b; 8: 3, 4).

16 Cicero, "De amicitia", in *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship*, ed. Michael Pakaluk (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1991): 76–116. 85.

The apostle John echoes Paul's language when he famously declares in his first letter: "God is love" (1 John 4: 16). Jerome renders the original Greek *Ho theos agapê estin* into Latin as *Deus caritas est*. John continues his letter: "Herein is our love made perfect (*teteleiôtai, perfecta*), that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:16–17). Other New Testament versions of the injunction to love the other as oneself also conclude with exhortations to achieve "perfection" akin to the divine (see, for example, Matthew 5:43–4, 48). They have their source in Leviticus 19:18, a text which predates classical writers like Aristotle on friendship.

In their extrapolation of charity as the basis for a Christian commonwealth, Puritan writers drew upon Thomas Aquinas's discussion, which primarily engages Aristotle's notion of *philia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Even more striking, however, are the echoes in Winthrop's address of the twelfth-century Cistercian abbot, Aelred of the Rievaulx monastery in Yorkshire, whose profound youthful regard for Cicero's *De amicitia* led the monk to compose a Christianized account of friendship suitably entitled *De spiritali amicitia*. Friendship, Aelred explains by paraphrasing Cicero, originates in the will of "Sovereign Nature" that "peace encompass all his creatures and society unite them; and thus all creatures obtain from him, who is supremely and purely one, some trace of that unity". For this reason, every creature, including angels, seeks and thrives in "society with its own kind".<sup>17</sup>

According to Aelred, the creation of Eve "from the very substance of the man" epitomizes this desire for unity in the human realm. While this idea reinforces what for Aelred is the central lesson of friendship, "that human beings are equal and, as it were, collateral", it conflicts with Christian doctrine's understanding of the wife's necessary marital subjection to her husband's earthly authority. The fall allowed "private good to take precedence over the common weal", thus corrupting friendship, which can only exist among virtuous people. Thereafter, what Aelred calls "spiritual friendship", the classical dyad of moral equals augmented by God, was confined to "the few good" believers "who bound themselves together by a closer bond of love and friendship" while they exercised charity in the form of "the natural law" of earthly morality to everyone else.<sup>18</sup> Aquinas expanded on this distinction in his *Summa Theologiae* and

17 Aelred of Rievaulx, "Spiritual Friendship", *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship*, ed. Michael Pakaluk (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1991): 129–148, 141.

18 Aelred, 142–43. According to Donald Burt, Augustine addressed this problem by distinguishing the physical inequality of the sexes from the spiritual equality of "souls" reflected in their equality of rights and duties in marriage. However, he did hold that wives (not women in general) were subordinate (by nature or free choice) to husbands (not men in

concludes, "charity is the friendship of man for God" and "extends to sinners, whom, out of charity, we love for God's sake".<sup>19</sup>

In strikingly similar terms, Winthrop reminds his listeners that they are bound by "natural law" that requires mutual ethical treatment, an imperfect form of "brotherhood" to be superseded by the anticipated heavenly "friendship" with Christ. This "special relacion" binds believers into a single "body" that transcends time, space, and death, as Cicero asserts perfect friendship does. Laelius, the speaker of Cicero's *De amicitia*, prefigures Winthrop when he declares that "the finest thing of all about" perfect friendship is its provision of a "model" for the virtuous self:

the man who keeps his eye on a true friend, keeps it, so to speak, on a model of himself. For this reason, friends are together when they are separated, they are rich when they are poor, strong when they are weak, and – a thing even harder to explain – they live on after they have died, so great is the honor that follows them, so vivid the memory, so poignant the sorrow.<sup>20</sup>

Winthrop implies that Puritans undertaking this special endeavor, who referred to themselves as "visible saints", have a particular obligation to exercise "mercy" towards one another (*WP* 283–84).

Winthrop's idea of a corporate conscience echoes an already established theory of interconnection, a vision of society as an integrated organism in which each person played a different but vital role known to the Puritans as "technologia".<sup>21</sup> Tying together the social and scientific as well as the theological and faith-based to form a great circle of knowledge, technologia is an idea with roots in classical thought. In 1630, the year of Winthrop's departure, William Ames, the eminent English Puritan divine, took up the task his

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general) because men excelled in "speculative reason" while women excelled in "practical reason", the former being the more important of the two. But since marriage is modeled on the relationship of Christ to the church and itself models the "friendly society", wifely subordination models the necessity for the deference to authority in any orderly organization. See *Friendship and Society: An Introduction to Augustine's Practical Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 100–111. This reasoning resembles Aristotle's distinction between the sexes in marriage.

19 Thomas Aquinas, "Questions on Love and Charity", in *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship*, ed. Michael Pakaluk (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1991): 146–184, 172–73.

20 Cicero, vii.23, in *Other Selves* 88.

21 Perry Miller, *New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1939), 161.

teacher Alexander Richardson left unfinished at his death and began writing *Technometria*, an attempt to give Peter Ramus's influential logical method an overall theory – technologia. The result, published in the year of his death in 1633, determined the early curriculum at Harvard College and set the course of higher education in North America. In Thesis 77, Ames eschews the radical Puritan rejection of classical (because pagan) learning and advocates a Christian humanist “friendship” with the “truth” it contained: “Thus, let us not become the slaves of anyone, but, performing military service under the banner of free truth, let us freely and courageously follow the truth that leads and calls away from the hallucinations of our elders, as they are men who have also been created in the image of Adam. Testing all things, retaining that which is good, let Plato be a friend, let Aristotle be a friend, but even more let truth (*veritas*) be a friend”.<sup>22</sup> According to the modern editor's commentary, the final sentence of this thesis, which Ramus as well as several New England divines quoted and which also appeared on the title or subtitle page of every edition of Ames's *Philosophemata*, echoes a passage from Book One of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*: “Yet it would perhaps be thought to be better, indeed to be our duty, for the sake of maintaining the truth even to destroy what touches us closely, especially as we are philosophers or lovers of wisdom; for, while both are dear, piety requires us to honor truth above our friends”.<sup>23</sup>

The “truth” Winthrop strove to honor in his address involved yoking together two contradictory images of “Christian Charitie” that operate simultaneously in the secular, social world of business, law, and personal relations, and in the sacred, theological realm of regenerate saints.<sup>24</sup> The phrase, “a familiar Commerce”, is Winthrop's brilliant figure for this conflation, drawing attention to the Latin root *merx* (commodity or merchandise) of both “commerce” and “mercy” and mobilizing the meaning of “commerce” as any communication or exchange in economic, sexual, and divine spheres. Winthrop needed to marshal authoritative, persuasive, and familiar figures of collective responsibility and cohesion, because according to the opening proposition of his address,

22 William Ames, *Technometry* (1633), trans. Lee W. Gibbs (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1979), 106–07.

23 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1:6, 939; 1096a 16–18; Ames, 163. In a personal communication, David Lupton notes that “a more immediate source was the quasi-proverb ‘Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas’, which alluded not only to the passage in Aristotle, but also to a passage in Plato's *Phaedo* (91B), where Socrates, facing death, tells his friends that they should ‘pay heed not so much to Socrates, but rather to the truth’. Unlike the Aristotle passage, both the Plato and the common proverb mention the names of philosophers, which makes it a closer match to the words of Ames”.

24 Dawson, “Christian Charitie,” 120.



the earthly social order is, by divine fiat, hierarchical: "God Almightye in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the condicion of mankinde, as in all times some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjeccion" (*WP* 282). In the next breath, however, Winthrop amends this starkly feudal division, explaining that by "rich" "are comprehended all such as are able to live comfortably by their owne means duely improved" (*WP* 283).

Echoing Aelred on the origins of friendship and its distinction from charity, Winthrop proposes several "reasons" for the existence of inequality in wealth and power, the last and most important of which undoes it: "That every man might have need of other, and from hence they might be all knitt more nearly together in the Bond of brotherly affection" (*WP* 283). The gendered language covers over inequalities in the "universal" bond that appear in Aelred's citation of Eve's creation as friendship's "lesson" of equality and will reappear later to further trouble Winthrop's rhetoric. Here the "bond" of fraternal love, especially between regenerate Christians who considered themselves "one in Christ", is theoretically a relation of equality. Yet how were Puritans to manage this structural contradiction, especially when different rules govern the socially stratified body, the commercially incorporated body, and the spiritually egalitarian one?

## 2 First Figurative Ligament: The Body

After addressing practical questions about conducting worldly business in an otherworldly way, Winthrop mobilizes two figures – body and covenant – to describe the relationship between saints. Both figures trouble his opening assertion of inherent social hierarchy and eventual spiritual equality. In his exposition of love as "the bond of perfection", Winthrop draws on Paul's description in Ephesians 4:16 and paraphrases his explanation that the church like "the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body" (1 Corinthians 12:12). Renaissance friendship theory offers a secular and inverted version of this paradox in its fondness for the other Aristotelian formulation of perfect friendship, quoted from Nicholas Grimald's poem in *Tottel's Miscellany*, "one soull ... in bodies twain".<sup>25</sup> Spiritualizing

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25 Hyder Edward Rollins, ed, *Tottel's Miscellany (1557–1587)* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 106. Grimald (1519–62) promoted ancient philosophy and published a translation of Cicero's *De Officiis* in 1556. But his interest in friendship did not prevent him from notoriously betraying his friend Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, who

Aristotle's conception of "civic" friendship, Paul explains that each part of the body, like each member of the church, is different in "gifts", "administrations", and "operations", but each is equally valuable: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free" (12:4–6, 13). The "equality" of members of quite different social ranks – enslaved and free – is, thus, a spiritual calculus that does not fully succeed in repressing or erasing the traces of earthly social hierarchy that render them unequal and unassimilable.

Spirit "perfects" this uneasy bond, which like Aristotle's *philia* is virtuous, mutual, and complete and, like Aelred's spiritual friendship, is "sweet", sympathetic, and intimate but not confined to the traditional dyad. According to Winthrop, the ligament of spiritual love "knitts these parts together" into a "perfeccion", making "eache part soe contiguous" that they "do mutually participate with eache other, both in strengthe and infirmity in pleasure and paine" (WP 288). "Perfection" figures the achievement of equality through sympathy across difference. Christ, of course, is the ultimate "model" or "pattern" of a body of perfected parts and is also the means of perfection or the "knitting" together of "contrary quallities and elements" into a cohesive whole (WP 288). The resulting "mutual participation" of the parts requires not just reciprocated feelings – an affective "Sympathy of partes" – but a proximity and nearly physical or, more properly, metaphysical touching or overlap ("soe contiguous") in order to overleap the abyss of contentious differences separating people. This sympathy counteracts the fallen principle of selfishness, so that we "seeke" others instead of only ourselves, and "make others Condicions our owne" (WP 289, 294).

How does one make another's condition one's own? Winthrop insists that saints must "feel" what others feel not only in times of crisis and need but as the primary ontological condition of visible sainthood. Even though others may be in very different social circumstances, they are part of the special circle of Christian fellowship. To achieve this interchange, Winthrop appears to be recommending the exercise of the wildly unstable, dangerous but potent force of the imagination. Winthrop's call to sympathy works across different registers, revealing a spiritual, heavenly commonality clouded by earthly social differences. The Fall isolated people in bubbles of self-interest and self-pleasure. Only a renovating power like the imagination is strong enough to take us out of ourselves, overcome fallen selfishness, reveal common spiritual ground, and produce the selfless action Winthrop calls a "Sympathie of

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was burned at the stake as one of the Oxford Martyrs during the Marian Persecutions. Thanks to David Lupton for this side note.

affections" (WP 290). This affective sympathy in turn produces a love that is "reciprocall in a most equal and sweete kind of Commerce" (WP 291). One of the meanings of the adjective "sweet", according to the OED, is "beloved" or "dear", which connects it to an ancient meaning of *philos*. It also has deep sacramental implications. Almost a century later, the poet Edward Taylor will use "sweet" to express the same heightened feelings of divine love he experienced meditating on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, where salvation comes in distinctly gustatory and gendered terms.<sup>26</sup> Taylor's usage presages Jonathan Edwards's frequent employment of "sweet" as an adjective that calls attention to the sensory delight and specifically experiential nature of religious faith. Winthrop emphasizes the "sensiblenes" of the "special relacion" (WP 289) among Christians, which he protests is "a reall thing not Imaginarie" (292).

But this affective identification – not just imagining but literally putting oneself in another's place and practicing the financial liberality to prove it – cannot happen until the fallen self is forcibly displaced and replaced, until "Christ comes and takes possession of the soule, and infuseth another principle love to God and our brother" (WP 290). Thus, the "familiar Commerce" Winthrop advocates has a physical, almost erotic quality reinforced by the sensory and sacramental implications of Winthrop's vision of Christian love as "a kind of socialized Eucharist".<sup>27</sup> These sacramental implications also had important political ramifications. Despite his rhetorical exertions and his strategic yoking of "sweet" and "equal" to describe the mutuality of "Commerce", Winthrop's spiritual body remains hierarchical, just as the corporate church has Christ at its metaphorical head while the members make up the clearly subordinate body. Even his example of the mouth's function in "the naturall body" displays an Aristotelian notion of "proportionate" or "distributive" justice that obtains between unequals: while this organ receives and minces food to nourish all the parts, they "send back by secret passages a due proportion of the same nourishment in a better forme for the strengthening and comfoteing the mouthe" (WP 291–92).<sup>28</sup>

26 For an exploration of Taylor's deployment of the feminine in relation to the Puritan sacrament, see Ivy Schweitzer, *The Work of Self-Representation: Lyric Poetry in Colonial New England*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 79–125.

27 Stephen Foster, *Their Solitary Way: The Puritan Social Ethic in the First Century of Settlement in New England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 44.

28 Scott Michaelsen reads this passage as very explicitly referring to a hierarchical "commercial" system in which the mouth represents the rich and the other parts are the poor, and these "parts" are expected to return wealth, duly transformed, to the rich who, as Winthrop earlier notes, have a natural inclination to "eate upp the poore" (WP 2:283). See "John Winthrop's 'Modell' Covenant and the Company Way", *Early American Literature* 27, no. 2 (1992): 85–100.

### 3 Second Figurative Ligament: Covenant and Contract

It is not until the highly rhetorical “application” towards the end of the address that Winthrop unveils his other figure for mutuality in his performative declaration of incorporation: “wee are a Company ... knit together by this bond of love”, and “by a mutuall consent through a speciall overruling providence” are sent to “cohabit” and “consort” in North America under a duly established civil and ecclesiastical polity (*WP* 292–93). Subtly, through the strategic repetition of the first person plural pronoun and verbs enacting connection (“knitts”, “bonds”), the elite stockholding “company” dissolves into a diverse but now unified spiritual elite. In his constitution of this new entity, Winthrop conflates civic rule with the private sphere’s heterosexual order as he builds on the imagery of “Cohabitation and Consorteshipp” by invoking “the more neare bond of marriage” to describe the obligations binding God and the saints. In the next paragraph, however, the marital tie morphs into “a special Commission”, which God “looks to have ... strickly observed in every Article”, and a few lines later it becomes the vaunted “Covenant” which, Winthrop informs his audience, God will ratify and seal by bringing the saints safely to North America, tolerating no failure or “breache” (*WP* 294).

Scholars have extolled this audacious use of covenantal language, which draws on a long history in the Hebrew and Christian bibles, but also appears to bind God in promises that imply an Arminian and Socinian – that is, from the Protestant perspective, heretical – quantity of human “will” and agency. Another understanding of “covenant”, especially in its political context, is “contract”, a term that does not appear in the address but more accurately describes the “speciall Commission” the Puritans under Winthrop’s leadership “have taken out”. Winthrop expands this metaphor: “the Lord hath given us leave to drawe our owne Articles we have professed to enterprise these Accions upon these and these ends” (*WP* 294). The attribution of activity and human agency suggests that Winthrop may be referring to a new theory of contracts emerging in the seventeenth century as European thought shifted the basis of social relations from status to rights and from the patriarchal family to the individual. Contracts differ from legal covenants in understanding the specified obligations as “acts of will” that are mutually binding and entered voluntarily.<sup>29</sup> In order to promote free and uncoerced consent, contractual mutuality requires a likeness or parity between parties that renders them competent to agree on fair terms for the transaction. On the heels of this pre-modern legal

29 Michaelsen, 87. Dawson rejects this reading as “an oversimplification” (“Christian Charitie,” 119).

understanding of contract would come the social contract theory of writers like John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, though women's inclusion in these theories is ambiguous.<sup>30</sup>

In his famous last speech to the General Court in 1645, Winthrop figures this consent to subordination as the "liberty" with which wives "chose" to subordinate themselves to husbands and church members submit themselves "where-with Christ hath made us free".<sup>31</sup> This language refracts Renaissance discourses of amity, where consent is the means of bonding between equals, through the crucial difference that the friends are "sovereign" – that is, selves unsubordinated to another earthly power. Thus, the horizontal "fastening" handclasp of amity becomes the emblematic "good faith" handshake of equals sealing a contract or business deal.

Winthrop was no stranger to these discourses and their formulaic language of specifically male affiliation.<sup>32</sup> Just before leaving on the *Arbella*, the usually tempered stylist penned a letter to his old friend Sir William Springe that rehearses the "knitting" language of his address as a form of masculine amity:

I loved you truely before I could think that you took any notice of me: but now I embrace you and rest in your love: and delight to solace my first thoughts in these sweet affections of so deare a friend. The apprehension of your love and worth together have overcome my heart, and removed the veil of modestye, that I must needes tell you, my soule is knitt to you as the soule of Jonathan to David: were I now with you, I should bedowe that sweet bosome with the teares of affections: O what a pinche will it be to me, to parte with such a friend! If any Embleme may expresse our Condition in heaven, it is this communion in love.<sup>33</sup>

Winthrop resolves initial anxieties about his worthiness (his equality with Springe) by recognizing the "sweetness" of affection and the mutuality of "love and worth" captured in the biblical exemplum of Jonathan and David, which

30 See Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), which argues that the social contract theory of Enlightenment thinkers implies a "sexual contract" related to the marriage contract – the only contract considered acceptable for women to enter (with the blessings of the father) – that kept women as wives subordinated to the authority of men as husbands.

31 John Winthrop, *Winthrop's Journal: "History of New England" 1630–1649*, ed. James Kendall Hosmer, 2 vols (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908), 2: 239.

32 The groundbreaking study of early modern friendship in England is Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

33 8 February 1629/30, *WP* 2: 205–06.

he also mentions in his sermon. He reaches an emotional and rhetorical climax in his apostrophe to the bittersweet pain of separation, which he assuages with the abstracted “emblem” of an earthly Christian communion so powerful that it offers a palliative foretaste of paradise.

We can see how Winthrop’s language and allusions anticipate the recommendations he makes later in his address. The grandson of a self-made member of the landed gentry, Winthrop may have consulted Thomas Elyot’s 1531 treatise on the education of gentlemen, and if so, would have come across this paraphrase of Cicero in Elyot’s account of the exemplary bond between Titus and Gysippus at the book’s center: “Frendship is none other thinge, but a perfecte consent of all thinges appertayninge as well to god as to man, with beneuolence and charitie”.<sup>34</sup> In his 1481 translation of this passage from Cicero, John Tiptoft employed Winthrop’s favorite image of “knyttyng to gydre” the consonant wills in friendship.<sup>35</sup> In his address, Winthrop puts this rhetoric to work when he asserts that “the way to drawe men to the workes of mercy is not by force of Argument from the goodness or necessity of the worke” which appeals to the “rationall mind”. Rather, Winthrop seeks to woo his listeners “by frameing these affections of love in the hearte” (*WP* 288) to “frame” a Christianized version of classical friendship.

#### 4 Christian “Commerce” and the Classical Ideal

In his long explanation of the “inward” exercise of love, Winthrop cites “that maxime of philosophy, *Simile simili gaudet* or like will to like”, to argue that Christian love is the result of a perceptible, almost physical resemblance. God loves the natural world and his elect to the extent that they reflect his image. Likewise, “betweene the members of Christ, each discernes by the worke of the spirit his own Image and resemblance in another, and therefore cannot but love him as he loves himselfe” (*WP* 290). These spiritual powers of “discernment” do not merely enable the elect to detect reflections of their redeemed Christlike selves in others but compel such recognition as an ineluctable call. Classical friendship doctrine and its Renaissance redactions inform this

34 Thomas Elyot, *The Boke Named The Governour* (1531), ed. Foster Watson (New York: Everyman Press, 1907), 162.

35 Shannon, *Sovereign Amity* 41. Shannon cites a host of translations, emblem books, and commonplace books that recycled the highlights of Cicero’s “De amicitia” for a Tudor readership (28).

formulation.<sup>36</sup> The source of Winthrop's "maxime" is Erasmus's *Adages*, a popular collection of ancient wisdom that appeared in Nicolas Udall's English translation in the mid-sixteenth century and identified the source of this commonplace as Book Eight of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle's extended discussion of friendship.<sup>37</sup> Elements of Aristotelian friendship appear throughout Winthrop's address, but from the outset, they begin to slide into a discourse of marriage.

In the opening section of the address, Winthrop explains that the saint must perform the commandment "to love his neighbor as himself" that grounds "all the precepts of the morrall lawe, which concernes our dealings with men, ... out of the same affection, which makes him carefull of his owne good according to that of our Saviour. Math: [7:12] Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you" (*WP* 283–84). The idea of other-directed love based on the regard for one's own worth and virtue, which is neither selflessness nor the egocentric desires of the fallen self, echoes the Aristotelian notion of *philia* or love of the "other" self. Generalized to all humanity, it becomes the "golden rule". The version of this central precept that Winthrop cites from Matthew 7:12 does not mention love at all, but rather refers its authority to "the law and the prophets". Winthrop begins his discussion with a paraphrase of Matthew's first formulation of this rule, "to love his neighbor as himself", calling it "the first of these lawes ... by which wee are regulated in our conversacion one towards another" (*WP* 283). This version with its appeal to a universal love appears earlier in Matthew 5:43–44 as an amendment of the tribalistic Hebraic law that teaches a more exclusive love of kin and neighbors and hatred of enemies. Grounding his notion of charity in both the law and love is crucial for Winthrop's particular vision.

Chapter five of Matthew is an important source for Winthrop, since it also contains the phrase that will become the famous watchword of his address: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (5:14). These apparently diverse formulations of the "golden rule" come together in Matthew 22: 37–40 when a "lawyer" from among the threatened Pharisees, thinking to "tempt" Jesus into heresy, asks "which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus answers, much like a seasoned rabbi, by amending the

36 Wilson Carey McWilliams also reads Winthrop's address as an important contribution to "the idea of fraternity in America". See *The Idea of Fraternity in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 133.

37 Erasmus, *Adages, The Collected Works of Erasmus*. vol. 31, trans. Margaret Mann Phillips (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), I ii 21, 167.

question. He cites the first commandment to love God wholly, but also insists that there is another “great” commandment: to love one’s neighbor as oneself, not specifically part of the Mosaic law but also – equally? – fundamental. In fact, these two commandments are themselves like mirror images, associated by and with similarity: “This”, Jesus says about loving God, “is the first and great commandment. And the second is like (*homoios*) unto it”, so that loving God and loving the other as oneself are homologous. He then grounds the ethical treatment of others as second selves and the commandment’s authority in *both* love and law: “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”, he asserts (Matt. 22:40).

Winthrop echoes and adapts classical friendship doctrine in other ways. He holds up the “primitive Church” in which members “had all things in Common” – Aristotle’s description of the sharing between brothers and comrades – as a model for the “liberality” Puritans must exercise “in cause of Community of perill”, his term for a group like the English Puritans, émigrés, and their supporters living under extraordinary circumstances (*WP* 287). Echoing John 15:13, “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends”, Winthrop exhorts Puritan saints “to lay downe your lives for the brethren” (*WP* 289), to “doe good” for each other without expectation of reward except the recompense of exercising mercy (*WP* 291). He asserts that this love is “free, active strong Couragious permanent” (*WP* 92), characteristics that echo classical descriptions of male homosocial friendship based in and productive of virtue. Winthrop echoes the language of mutual attraction that pervades Cicero’s “De amicitia”, especially Laelius’s assertion that “there is nothing that so attracts and draws anything to itself as likeness of character does friendship”.<sup>38</sup> The result is “a compact of friendship” (cf. *contrahat amicitiam*), a term that means both a collection and assemblage as well as a financial or business transaction.

## 5 Charitie/Friendship as Heavenly Marriage

Although Winthrop imagines Christian saints practising a version of antiquity’s ideal of friendship as a wider affiliation with a select group, the models he offers his listeners are all dyadic. In a long and quite remarkable passage that prepares his audience for his duly famous “Conclusions” in which he hails them in the gospel’s words (*WP* 295), Winthrop delivers a lyrical paean to the “inward” exercise of mercy – the spiritual love of one soul for another – in the

<sup>38</sup> Cicero, viii. 50 in *Other Selves*, 98.



form of an extended description of the soul's "doing good" for its beloved. He genders the soul of the Christian saint female, as was conventional in Christian writing, partly because the Latin word for soul, *anima*, is feminine. This also reflects classical philosophy's gendered divisions of mental capacities and the association of femininity, appetite, and passion. For example, Cicero attributes the irresistible attraction of likeness cited above to *natura*, a feminine noun: "Now nothing is so eager, so greedy for its like as nature (*Nihil est enim appetentius similitum sui nec rapacius quam natura*)."<sup>39</sup> Winthrop's "soul" is not necessarily the opposite of the body, which is feminized in that binary; rather, it is the spiritual organ of saints making up the church, which he figures as the feminine "Spouse" in relation to Christ the bridegroom.

Unified by a rhythmic repetition of the pronoun "shee", the passage from "A Modell", which I quote in full, echoes the language of spiritual craving for likeness. It begins with an extraordinary simile whose theme itself is "likeness", comparing the soul's *caritas* to Adam's prelapsarian experience of innocent yet insistent desire for Eve:

Now when the soule which is of a sociable nature findes any thing like to it selfe, it is like Adam when Eve was brought to him, shee must have it one with herselfe this is fleshe of my fleshe (saith shee) and bone of my bone shee conceives a great delighte in it, therefore shee desires nearness and familiarity with it: shee hath a greate propensity to doe it good and receives such content in it, as feareing the miscarriage of her beloved shee bestowes it in the inmost closett of her heart, she will not endure that it shall want any good which shee can give it, if by occasion shee be withdrawne from the Company of it, shee is still lookeing towards the place where shee left her beloved, if shee heares it groane shee is with it presently, if shee finde it sadd and disconsolate shee sighes and mournes with it, shee hath no such joy, as to see her beloved merry and thriving, if shee see it wronged, shee cannot beare it without passion, she settts no boundes of her affections, nor hath any thought of reward, shee findes recompence enoughe in the exercise of her love towards it. (WP 290–91)

This intensifying catalogue encompasses a wide variety of types of "love": heterosexual and erotic passion that desires physical closeness and cannot brook separation; protective maternal and parental love bordering on sacrifice; amicable desires to "do good" for one's friend without reciprocity, but also to share

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39 Cicero, xiv.50 in *Other Selves*, 98.

affectively in the other's "conditions"; a humane instinct for justice; a sense of possessively holding the other close ("in the inmost closett of her heart"); and yet a primal "oceanic" sense of oneness, expansiveness, and dissolving boundaries in which to give all freely and happily is to receive all back in even fuller measure. This is Winthrop's understanding of Christian charity, "a most equall and sweete kinde of Commerce" based in the recognition of spiritual resemblance (*WP* 291).

The initial reference to the first couple connects such commerce with a heterosexual love modeled on the example of *unfallen* marriage whose performative words the soule utters to its beloved "likeness": "fleshe of my fleshe ... bone of my bone". In the Hebrew account of creation (Genesis 2: 23), Adam addresses these words to Eve, whom God has created out of his body, when she is brought to him, giving a literal basis to the injunction in the next verse that in earthly marriage, a man "shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2: 24). But in putting these words into the mouth of the female "soule", Winthrop routes his reference through Paul's spiritualized reading of the Genesis passage as "a great mystery ... concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5: 32). In Paul's reworking, "flesh" comes to stand for the spiritual "body" of the church, its members whom Christ loves as his "bride".<sup>40</sup> While "likeness" produces "liking" in Winthrop's example, gender difference colors

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40 I draw on Thomas Luxon's discussion of this complex biblical crux in *Single Imperfection: Milton, Marriage and Friendship* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005), 131–35. By contrast, Douglas Anderson in *A House Divided: Domesticity and Community in American Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) argues that the "shee" is Eve, addressing Adam in intensely sexual terms that exalt her as a version of Mary, but also make her Winthrop's "model citizen" (12–13). This misreading allows Anderson to claim this moment as an "important modification of the hierarchical tradition" which places heterosexual intimacy at the heart of American notions of community (14). While I agree that Winthrop strategically displaces egalitarian relations with heterosexual ones, I don't see this as a progressive modification of "the hierarchical tradition" but as a reinforcement of it. Furthermore, Anderson's reading ignores the important distinction between prelapsarian and fallen marriage and dismisses what he himself acknowledges as Winthrop's citation of David and Jonathan as "the second of the instructive instances" of a social ideal "more demanding and more rewarding (he [Winthrop] suggests) than marriage" (12). Nevertheless, Anderson argues that the "fluidity of gender" he reads in this passage promotes a Puritan/American communitarian vision that places marriage at its moral centre and, correspondingly, elevates women and domesticity "as a privileged sphere of meaning" (2). This not only ignores what Anderson himself acknowledges is Winthrop's preferred social model – male friendship – and links women to an essentialist domesticity, but also illustrates the critical and heteronormative myopia concerning the importance, even existence, of friendship as a defining mode of affiliation.

heterosexual relations with an understanding of "difference" as inequality that gets translated into social and political terms.

Despite its language of sexual difference, scholars have understood Protestant marriage as promoting equality between heterosexual partners. Edmund Leites, for example, argues that classical friendship models informing "the aristocratic idea of friendship among males gave way to the love between husband and wife".<sup>41</sup> But as several scholars point out, for Protestants, "companionship" did not merely describe marital compatibility and conversation but connoted, as Elizabeth Dillon argues, "a sexual division of labor within the household". Marriage competes with and ultimately overshadows friendship, both as a model of political consent and as "a model of privatized subject ratification".<sup>42</sup> Sexual difference and gender hierarchy remain marriage's salient characteristics. Later in his address, Winthrop invokes "the more neare bond of marriage, betweene [God] and us", positioning the Puritans as the collective, clearly subordinate "bride" of Christ who is the superior, clearly dominant "husband" (*WP* 293).

In the address's final admonition, Winthrop urges his audience, by "cleaving" to God, to "choose life" and thus – significantly for the "commercial" multivalence of his dominant imagery – "prosperity", the final word of the address. In the marriage ceremony, the "good faith" handshake of the business contract takes the revealing form of the father "giving away" the bride to her new male authority by laying her hand in his. Reformed Protestant thought attempted to link the three major affective modes of kinship, love, and friendship in the internally skewed notion of "companionate" marriage: spouses were to be lovers and friends, but wives remained subject to the rule of husbands, just as saints of both genders willingly subordinated themselves to the rule of monarch and God. Because the Puritans believed in a "natural" and divinely sanctioned hierarchy of gender, they preferred marriage as the analogy for human-divine relations.

Despite the considerable rhetorical slippage between affective modes in his address, Winthrop's insistence on resemblance as the grounds of Christian love and his emphasis on an "equal" exchange between saints strongly suggest that his paradigm for *caritas* in the purified commonwealth is not marriage – even

41 Edmund Leites, "The Duty to Desire: Love, Friendship, and Sexuality in Some Puritan Theories of Marriage", *Journal of Social History* (15, no. 3, 1982): 383–408, 393–94.

42 Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, *The Gender of Freedom: Fictions of Liberalism and the Literary Public Sphere* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 129–30. See also Laurie Shannon, "Likening: Rhetorical Husbandries and Portia's 'True Conceit' of Friendship", *Renaissance Drama* 31 (2002): 3–26, and Lorna Hudson, *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994).

unfallen marriage – but a version of homosocial friendship. Through this slip-page, Winthrop floats the general idea of spiritual egalitarianism while he subtly reintroduces androcentrism and male dominance. For example, Winthrop offers proof of the soul's passionate loving in the "life in Jonathan and David" (WP 291), one of the most frequently cited scriptural (as opposed to secular) examples of male friendship. It is the example he invoked in his passionate farewell letter to his friend William Springle. In *Wonder-Working Providence: 1628–1651* (London 1654), an account of the Puritans first years, Edward Johnson, a zealous member of Winthrop's émigré community, used the same example to describe the emotional farewell at Southampton of two Puritan leaders, one of whom was most certainly Winthrop (and the other may have been John Cotton): "Both of them had their farther speech strangled from the depth of their inward dolor; with breast-breaking sobs, till leaning their heads each on others shoulders, they let fall the salt-dropping dewes of vehement affection, striving to exceede one another, much like the departure of David and Jonathan".<sup>43</sup> This exemplary pair serves Winthrop's multiple purposes in other revealing ways.

Jonathan was the son and heir of Saul, king of the embattled Israelites. Winthrop reads this figure from the Hebrew Bible typologically, characterizing Jonathan as "a valiant man" and one "endued with the spirit of Christ" – that is, as a precursor of the Christian dispensation. Discovering the same spirit in the young David, Jonathan "knitts" his heart to the youth, "loved him as his own soule", strips himself of his finery to adorn David, desires to please him, converses with him rather than with his father's courtiers, protects him from dangers, and cannot bear to be parted from his friend without "abundance of Teares" (WP 291). In other words, Winthrop's extended paraphrase of 1 Samuel 18 in his sermon repeats but also complements and competes with the inventory of the feminine soul's loving actions on behalf of her beloved in terms of male friendship, complete with the "teares of affections" Winthrop shed over his separation from Sir William. The feminine soul's love finds its exemplary expression in male homosocial friendship.<sup>44</sup>

The political dimensions of this male friendship also serve Winthrop's corporatizing purposes. After Saul welcomes David as a "son" and gives David his

43 Edward Johnson, *Johnson's Wonder-Working Providence: 1628–1651*, ed. J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1910), 52.

44 Michael Warner's queer reading comes to a similar conclusion, finding that Winthrop's "text also tends to invoke bonds and attractions between men on a much more literal level than he would seem prepared to avow", and he "even implies that Christian charity, like social attraction in general, will typically be a same-sex bond", – that is between men. See "New English Sodom", *American Literature* 64.1 (Mar. 1992), 19–47, 29.

daughter in marriage, the two young men, who should be rivals as heirs to the kingship, instead make "a covenant" (1 Samuel 18: 3). This pledge binds them to each other like brothers (via the flesh), but also like spouses (via the affections). Although Jonathan cannot completely discount his obligations and loyalty to his father and king, he protects David from his father's murderous jealousy and also prevents David from killing Saul. Reluctantly, Jonathan agrees to separate permanently from David in order to serve his father but refuses to breach the terms of their covenanted friendship. His love was, as David later explains in his often-repeated lament over his fallen friend, "wonderful, passing the love of women" (2 Samuel 1:26). It is not the disrupting ephemeral passion of *eros* but the freely chosen, tempering, undying loyalty of *philia*. Their covenant, we learn, extends to their progeny, binding them also to God, as the third partner in the Christian conception of spiritual friendship, and to each other in metaphorical marriage/kinship. In fact, this friendship does the work that arranged exogenous marriages were supposed to do: guarantee beneficial and stabilizing alliances between families and clans. In so doing, this marital-like covenant materially shapes the political leadership of Israel, just as male friendship shaped the republic of Athens and Rome and would – so Winthrop hoped – shape the commonwealth of Puritan New England.

In rehearsing the terms of this covenant, Jonathan repeats the performative phrase, "The Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever" (1 Samuel 20: 42). Their friendship produces an interchangeability that casts David as the adopted "son" of Saul and, thus, the heir to the kingship of Israel. Jonathan's "spirit" is mirrored in David, who, we learn before they even meet, has been "chosen" by God and on his commandment anointed by the prophet Samuel, thereby replacing Jonathan as Saul's political heir. Thus begins the "messianic" line, culminating with the birth of Jesus.<sup>45</sup> Jonathan's choice of an "other self" is God's choice of a king, just as Adam chooses the "helpmeet" God creates for and from him, and the regenerate soul recognizes other members of the elect. This emblematic friendship also reflects God's "choice" of the Puritans as the vanguard of a new Israel and the Puritans' "choice", which Winthrop prays will be like Jonathan's, "to keepe ... the Articles of our Covenant" with God (*WP* 295) and so establish a biblically-based social, political, and economic structure purified of selfishness and immorality.

Winthrop offers only one other example of this kind of "affection", also from the Hebrew scriptures – the love of Ruth and Naomi. Although it is a

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45 For scholarship on the relation of David and Jonathan, see Susan Ackerman, *When Heroes Love: The Ambiguity of Eros in the Stories of Gilgamesh and David* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), who calls their relationship "heroic love" rather than friendship.

friendship between women of different ages, status, and cultures, this relation serves Winthrop's purposes in being homosocial, dyadic, and intensely self-sacrificing. Ruth is a young Moabite woman who married Naomi's son when Naomi and her family took refuge in the neighboring region during a famine in Israel. After all the men in the family die, Ruth chooses to stay with her mother-in-law and return to Naomi's homeland. Not only does Ruth pledge her love to Naomi when the obligations of marriage and kinship no longer require it, but she refuses to return to her own family, as does Naomi's other Moabite daughter-in-law, and chooses to accept Naomi's God and kindred. Back among Naomi's people, Ruth marries Boaz, her mother-in-law's wealthy kinsman, and bears a son whom she gives to the older woman to raise and who is the grandfather of David (Ruth 4: 17). The women's relationship, like Jonathan and David's, also performs a kind of exogamous function in terms of the messianic line. Although Ruth is often taken as a conventional figure of selflessness, it is her voluntary choice of spiritual allegiance to Hebrew monotheism that distinguishes her, finds divine favor, and echoes classical friendship doctrine. Despite differences in background, age, and standing, the love Ruth and Naomi have for each other renders them interchangeable, even, in this case, as child bearers; so much so, that an outsider can fill Naomi's place in the Davidic line that will eventually produce Jesus.

Although Winthrop mentions Ruth and Naomi only in passing as one of many other instances of "reciprocally ... Commerce", this example foregrounds the unsettling theme of gender difference. The relationship between Ruth and Naomi fits uneasily into the classical friendship tropes that David and Jonathan's bond epitomizes. Not only are they women and, thus, excluded from ideal friendship because of the prevailing belief that, being ruled by passions and appetites, females were incapable of the highest forms of spirituality,<sup>46</sup> but they are of widely divergent ages and cultures. Rather, this relationship reinforces Winthrop's key point that Christian love transcends such differences and creates the "likeness" necessary for *caritas* on the basis of spiritual resemblance and the overmastering desire to do good for the other. Jonathan gives unstintingly to David, but it is their similarity of status that authorizes their interchangeability; the mutuality of *philia* continues to shape their affiliation. Ruth's love slips into an almost selfless Christian *agape*; furthermore, she

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46 Montaigne articulated this position most forcefully in his famous essay, "De l'amite". For a discussion of gender difference in classical friendship, see Ivy Schweitzer, *Perfecting Friendship: Politics and Affiliation in Early American Literature* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), especially "Introduction" and Chapter One.

is interchangeable with Naomi because of a specifically female ability to bear children. Thus, their "spiritual" affection brings them back to "nature" and the flesh, precisely what spiritual friendship was thought to transcend.

It is the evasion of the material and fleshly that drives Winthrop's utopic vision and, we might say, insures its failure. Such selfless giving, he insists, yields a "pleasure and content" that is "the soules paradise, both heare and in heaven" (WP 292). Such spiritual mutuality far outstrips the joys of earthly marriage, destined, so Paul teaches, to dissolve at death. Clinching his lengthy disquisition on the spiritual "marriage" to come in heaven that can be glimpsed in and most suitably emblemized by homosocial friendship, Winthrop declares: "In the State of Wedlock, there be many comfortes to beare out the troubles of that Condiçion; but let such as have tried the most, say if there be any sweetnes in that Condiçion comparable to the exercise of mutual love" (WP 292). Speaking as a man who found many comforts in his three marriages, Winthrop still propounds that earthly marriage is, finally, not quite as mutual nor as satisfying as "the most equal and sweet kinde of Commerce" tasted in spiritual love illustrated by perfect (male) friendship. This "charitie", a metaphorical love-based-in-law, was to be the foundation of Winthrop's exemplary "commonwealth".

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## Phillis Wheatley's Niobe Poetics

*Nicole A. Spigner*

Phillis Wheatley's poem, "Niobe in Distress", reimagines the Ovidian story of a rebellious and outspoken Theban queen who insults a goddess and suffers a horrifying punishment. To the women preparing for the goddess Latona's feast, Queen Niobe persuasively argues that she is as much a goddess as Latona, if not more so, because she has 14 children and Latona only two. She convinces the Theban women to stop their preparations for the feast and, ostensibly, their worship of Latona altogether. Furious with Niobe's actions, Latona sends her two children, Diana and Apollo, to kill each and every one of Niobe's children. In Wheatley's version of the myth, Niobe's character symbolically inhabits the position of the enslaved black mother who dares challenge the powers that define her and her children.

In reworking this myth, Wheatley speaks to the power of black motherhood, something that is otherwise, specifically in the Atlantic Slavery context, framed and experienced as denigration. By highlighting Niobe's rebellion against a totalizing power, Wheatley reclaims black motherhood as a site of resistance, not just one of vulnerability. Wheatley thereby transforms Niobe from haughty and prideful, the most popular interpretation Ovid's text,<sup>1</sup> to rebellious and determined. Moreover, Wheatley's transformation of Niobe pays homage to the variety of transformations within Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, wherein people often change into trees, animals, and in Niobe's case, earthly formations. By locating transformation in the character rather than the body of Niobe, Wheatley's poem is distinctly anti-sentimental, for Niobe reasserts her subjectivity as mother even as her children are dying, while also demanding that

1 Most often critics and artist-critics from the Medieval period through the current moment interpret Niobe's challenge to Latona as "hubris". While I do not deny Niobe's hubris, I understand through Wheatley that what is mistaken as only pride is a claim of humanity through motherhood – a misinterpretation of "pride" or the assignment of excessive pride to someone who would challenge the social order. For more Niobe critique and also the historical reception of Ovid, see at least: Charles Martindale, *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: CUP Archive, 1988); Stephen Hinds, Philip R. Hardie, and Alessandro Barchiesi, *Ovidian Transformations: Essays on the Metamorphoses and Its Reception* (Cambridge Philological Society, 1999); John F. Miller and Carole E. Newlands (*A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014).

audiences bear witness to the apex of her grief – an expression of what John C. Shields has identified as Wheatley's writing "the emotions of pain and danger that evoke the sublime".<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Wheatley's poem reveals the lengths to which agents of power (in this case, an angry goddess) will go to exercise and preserve their power. In short, Wheatley's "Niobe" simultaneously asserts the inherent rebellion in black motherhood and the extent to which those in power would deny motherhood to black women.

The variety of content within Wheatley's internationally-lauded collection, *Poems on Various Subjects* (1773), frames Phillis Wheatley's "Niobe" in a narrative of international, historical, and distinctly racialized parental loss.<sup>3</sup> First printed in London and then distributed in the U.S., *Poems* was "Printed for A. Bell, bookseller, Aldgate; and sold by Messrs. Cox and Berry, King-street, Boston". This transnational context frames not only the publication of, but also the variety of the poetic content within the collection, including "Niobe", which is located physically in the latter half of the collection and stands metaphorically at a crossroads between ancient Rome and the eighteenth-century trans-Atlantic. These international and black classical frameworks provide the context in which I read Wheatley's "Niobe" as a lens for black feminine motherhood and creative production in Wheatley's America. In typical interpretations of Ovid's version of the story, the queen, Niobe, suffers for her hubris.<sup>4</sup> Wheatley, by contrast, reimagines Niobe's crime as rebellion against unfair and unjustified power. I name Wheatley's multi-layered classical revision as "Niobe Poetics", the results of which respond to the intersectional conditions of race and power manifested in the historical conditions of black mothers during Atlantic slavery.

Niobe Poetics, like Black Classicism, has a multi-leveled definition. Literally, the term refers to the act of rewriting the Niobe myth to illuminate

2 John C. Shields, *The American Aeneas: Classical Origins of the American Self* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2001): 4, 29.

3 Phillis Wheatley, *Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral* (1773), <http://digital.tcl.sc.edu/cdm/ref/collection/pwp/id/138>.

4 While I maintain that the vast majority of critics and neoclassical artists (whom I call "critic-artists") interpret Niobe's story as a cautionary tale about pride, K. Sarah Myers argues that Niobe represents Ovid's own anxieties about exile. This more closely aligns with Wheatley's interpretation of Ovid – and there is room, here, to consider Niobe, as an enslaved, foreign woman, in exile from her home and from freedom. The history of Black American exile, particularly in the early- to mid-twentieth century, tracks with this notion. For Meyer's argument, see: Meyers, "Ovid's Self-Reception in His Exile Poetry"; Miller, John F., and Carole E. Newlands. *A Handbook to the Reception of Ovid* (John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 8–21. For more about Black American exile, see particularly works by and about James Baldwin, Richard Wright, Josephine Baker, and others.

the political and personal subject positions occupied by enslaved black women during the late eighteenth century. In other words, Niobe Poetics encompasses the writing practice as well as the execution and content of the poetics – just as Black Classicism is both the study of classical texts and languages as much as it is neoclassical practices by black artists. Additionally, Niobe Poetics refers to the reimagining of black womanhood as precarious through the specific practice of classical mimesis, the rehearsal and rewriting of classical texts. Niobe Poetics exposes the power machinations through which black women are transformed into precarious mothers through institutional, legal, social, and personal violences against them. As this chapter illustrates, Wheatley's Niobe Poetics reflects the history of black feminine precariousness in the U.S. By this I mean, of course, the violation of accepted morality implicit in oppression. I also refer to the relationship between *precariousness* and *precarity* at the intersection of gender, race, and class, as it applies uniquely to the black feminine experience during and “in the wake” of slavery, à la Christina Sharpe's discussions of contemporary repercussions within this painful legacy. To borrow Sharpe's language from *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being*, I contend that Wheatley took a “leap” from stolen child in Gambia to enslaved person reared by her enslavers in Boston to published author with a fan base that demanded her freedom: “a *part* of that leap and *apart* from its specificities are the sense and awareness of precarity; the precarities of the afterlives [and lives forged in] slavery....; the precarities of ongoing disaster of the ruptures of chattel slavery”.<sup>5</sup> Niobe Poetics encapsulates the state of this precarity as well as the resistance to it.

Niobe Poetics, therefore, manifests as both the reframing of Niobe as a rebel and also the rebellion inherent to Wheatley's act of writing and creative production. Niobe Poetics that is, includes, but also moves beyond the act of rewriting the Niobe myth, alone. Instead, Niobe Poetics undermines the individual and institutional conditions that maintain power dynamics that support a slighted goddess's right to slaughter children – the dynamics modelled in Atlantic slavery, and that resulted in the buying and selling of children away from mothers who were held in bondage. I argue here that Wheatley, herself, asserts a Niobe Poetics by rewriting Niobe as a figure of maternal grief and, more importantly, feminine rebellion. Moreover, her own writing manifests this rebellion: that Wheatley writes, at all, and deliberately embeds herself in a tradition of interpreting and revising the Niobe myth to undermine her own position as subject to power under the institution of Atlantic Slavery.

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5 Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016).

What follows attends to the shifts between Ovid's and Wheatley's versions of the Niobe mythology to argue for Niobe Poetics as rebellion: a model of the rebellious Black woman slave who challenges power structures and cultural norms. First, I reevaluate Ovid's Niobe and her motivations for rebellion; then I consider the story of Arachne, which immediately precedes Niobe's story in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, for it lays the groundwork for Wheatley's interpretation of Niobe as rebel mother. Finally, I interrogate the sophisticated racial and gender critiques that Wheatley embeds in her work as literary rebellion against the many people and institutions inhibiting her creative production. I conclude by identifying the critiques of the system of patronage that makes her and her literary production subject to surveillance and control. I intend to reveal the reciprocal relationship between Wheatley's and Ovid's texts, and, in the end, suggest that Wheatley's poem suggests that Ovid, too, couched Niobe in more of a narrative of rebellion than is often attributed to his version. Through Wheatley's work, we see Ovid's Theban queen as subject to the powers of Latona and, therefore, any of the Greco-Roman gods in the same way that the enslaved mother in the trans-Atlantic chattel system of human bondage suffers the whims of her enslaver.

## 1 Rebellion in the Ovidian Context: Arachne, Niobe's Countrywoman

The story of Niobe was known to Homer, as evidenced in the last book of the *Iliad* and numerous variants of it can be found especially from the middle of fifth century BCE onwards.<sup>6</sup> The fates of Niobe's children, the Niobids, were glazed in pottery and painted on marble long before Ovid wrote them into poetry. The story has many iterations, but the oldest versions usually include the story of one woman, Niobe, who offends the goddess Latona, the mother of Diana and Apollo.<sup>7</sup> Claiming fertility and maternity as the basis for feminine value, Niobe compares herself to the goddess and argues that Latona deserves no worship because she has only two children. As punishment for the insult, the goddess sends those children, the very reason for Niobe's disparagement of the goddess, to kill all of the Niobids. Depicted in art and literature from anywhere between four to fourteen children, the Niobids are shot with arrows

6 William Cook and James Tatum, *African American Writers and Classical Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 6.

7 For the purposes of this study, I use the Roman names of both the principal goddess, known in the Greek as Leto, and her daughter, Artemis. Diana/Artemis is never named in Wheatley's poem.

by Apollo and Diana. Sometimes their mother witnesses their deaths, sometimes they are out of her sight. Reportedly, the story maintained its symbolism, regardless of the number of children depicted and Niobe's absence: the collective suffering of the Niobids signifies their mother's mistake and punishment. Even *in absentia*, Niobe embodies extreme maternal grief, a warning for those who challenge a god or goddess's status.

In Book VI of the *Metamorphoses*,<sup>8</sup> Niobe's story immediately follows Ovid's account of Arachne,<sup>9</sup> Niobe's childhood friend and countrywoman. Punished for hubris not unlike Niobe's, Arachne had denied that Pallas taught her how to weave, simultaneously boasting that her weaving was superior to all others. Arachne's offense, therefore, is twofold: she denies Pallas's status as revered teacher and creator of human skill, and she rebels against the divine-human hierarchy by claiming superiority over a god. Crucial to her connection to Niobe, Arachne argues for the value of her human production: Arachne weaves a tapestry – her artistic production – as Niobe creates her children. Both women challenge the authority of the gods and rebel against the power structures that expose women to the violence of divine retribution. Through the stories of Arachne and Niobe, Ovid explored the risk women take in claiming their value through their unique production.

Upon hearing Arachne deny her status and assume victory, Pallas disguises herself as an old woman and challenges Arachne to a weaving contest. Pallas weaves a beautiful tapestry with the pantheon of gods at its centre, and Jupiter featured in the middle, as king. She also depicts her battle with Neptune, a battle that she won.<sup>10</sup> Her work reinforces the celestial hierarchy and underscores her rightful place among the gods with her image prominently representing her as a warrior:

at sibi dat clipeum, dat acutae cuspidis hastam,  
dat galeam capiti, defenditur aegide pectus,  
percussamque sua simulat de cusptide terram  
edere cum bacis fetum canentis olivae;  
mirarique deos: operis Victoria finis.<sup>11</sup>

[Giving herself a shield, sharp-pointed spear,  
a helmet upon her head, and a protective aegis,

8 Ov. *Met.* 6.146–312.

9 Ov. *Met.* 6.1–145.

10 Ov. *Met.* 6.70–71, 75–77.

11 Ov. *Met.* 6.78–82.

she points her spear to the ground and from which olives grow  
to the admiration of gods who recognize her work as Victory [over  
Neptune].]<sup>12</sup>

Minerva refutes Arachne's denial of her weaving ability by the reminder of her victory over Neptune for patronage of Athens.

Surrounding the central portraits, Pallas weaves four examples of humans punished by gods for various offenses, not unlike Arachne's crime against her. These are additional graphical exempla that warn Arachne of the potential consequences of the contest (*ut tamen exemplis intellegat aemula laudis, / quod pretium speret pro tam furialibus ausis*).<sup>13</sup> And, perhaps because Pallas wears a disguise, Arachne does not understand that she has guaranteed her punishment long before she agrees to the contest. In the four corners of her tapestry, Pallas depicts Haemus, transformed into ice-capped mountains, the Pygmy queen and Antigone (who are each turned into birds by Juno), and finally Cinyras, who is prostrate, embracing the temple steps that were once the bodies of his daughters. Conspicuously, Arachne depicts the suffering of both men and women; however, only the feminine characters transform. These figures, particularly Haemus, are reminders of humans who dared to place themselves at the level of the gods. The Pygmy queen and Antigone each claim to be more beautiful than Juno. And much like Arachne's defiance of divine order, she further ignores Pallas's cautionary tales and answers the tapestry with her historical account of human-divine interaction.

Rebutting Pallas's work and sealing her tragic fate, Arachne weaves a tapestry accounting for no fewer than 12 examples of *caelestia crimina*<sup>14</sup> of gods assuming disguises and raping human women. Arachne rewrites Pallas's depictions of human transformation and instead weaves images of gods who transform so that they might victimize women. Like Pallas, Arachne illustrates Neptune, a god who in previous books of the *Metamorphoses* was responsible for various crimes against women. She also features Jupiter, not as the king of the gods, but as a six-time sex offender. Ovid tells us that Pallas cannot deny the quality of Arachne's work. Despite (and perhaps because of) this, Pallas strikes Arachne twice in the head with her shuttle, and curses Arachne and all of her future progeny, saying: *lexque eadem poenae, ne sis secunda futuri, / dicta tuo generi*

12 As translated in Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, translated by Henry Riley (London: HG Bohn, 1861).

13 Ov. *Met.* 6.83–84.

14 Ov. *Met.* 6.131.

*serisque nepotibus esto!*<sup>15</sup> Thus, Pallas turns Arachne into a spider, not only as a means of punishment, but to quash any future creations that blaspheme against the gods. The lesson, it would seem, persists: people remain subject to the gods' desires. Human production, the replication or representation of their humanity – whether in the form of children or poetry – remains always threatened and mediated through those gods. In this particular instance, Pallas's desire for reverence supersedes Arachne's success. And yet, considering the unfolding of the story, and the fact that Arachne answers Pallas's theocentric and misanthropic art with her mythography, Ovid suggests that Arachne must first interpret Pallas's work before responding. In short, Arachne fully understands and chooses not to heed Pallas's warnings. Perhaps for Arachne and those who would hear (and write) her story, rebellion may be worth the risk. At the very least, rebellion forever marks Arachne's body and the bodies of all who follow her.

Within Ovid's text, Arachne's story transitions into that of Niobe, motivating Niobe's rebellion. With the "rumor" of Arachne's transformation "roaring" to a variety of places, Niobe hears of her countrywoman's punishment (*Lydia tota fremit, Phrygiaeque per oppida facti | rumor it et magnum sermonibus occupat orbem*),<sup>16</sup> which has torn the communities of Anatolia. It eventually reaches Thebes and inspires Niobe's outrage for her countrywoman. It also drives Niobe to challenge another goddess, which will end no better for Niobe than her childhood friend. Ovid introduces Niobe as Arachne's countrywoman whose husband and wealth do not bring her as much pride as her children. Already, the source of Niobe's pride frames her story. Thus, for Ovid, it will be her love of her children combined with her outrage over Arachne's fate that drives Niobe's actions. Arachne and Niobe's relationship – the significance of Arachne's story for Niobe, the ethnic connection between the women, as well as the similarities in the stories of each – extends Ovid's representation of human value in relation to the gods and the way that Book VI confirms the cost of human rebellion against divine claims of power.

## 2 Ovidian Niobe's Pride and Punishment

Ovid's version of Niobe's tale both defies and reinforces the warning provided through Arachne's fate. Learning about Arachne's transformation into a spider, and resuming Arachne's defiance against the gods, Niobe interrupts the Theban

15 Ov. *Met.* 6.137–38.

16 Ov. *Met.* 6.146–47.



women's preparations for Latona's feast. Arguing that Latona is less of a goddess than herself, Niobe counts her ancestry in her case against Latona, because her grandfathers, Olympian Jove and Titanic Atlas, qualify her as a goddess in her own right. She further contends that if fertility is the mark of goddesshood, she is more goddess than Latona because of her 14 children against Latona's two (*digna dea facies; huc natus adice septem / et totidem iuvenes et mox generosque nurusque!*).<sup>17</sup> Convinced either by Niobe's case or status as queen, the Theban women cease their preparations and remove their festal laurel crowns representing the blessings bestowed on them by their patron god. Latona sees her festival arrangements end as a result of Niobe's assertions and becomes indignant at Niobe's insolence. She then stakes a greater claim to motherhood, arguing that she is also Niobe's mother, therefore acknowledging Niobe and the Niobids as her own (*Indignata dea est summoque in vertice Cynthi / talibus est dictis gemina cum prole locuta: / "en ego vestra parens ..."*).<sup>18</sup> Next, she calls her children, Diana and Apollo, to go to Thebes and kill all of Niobe's children as punishment for the insult. The crimes of one mother against another, Niobe's denial of Latona's children, bind the divine family together in outrage. By claiming to be Niobe's mother, Latona is a mother enacting vengeance against her own daughter. Furthermore, by dispatching Apollo and Diana to exact her revenge, Latona proves the might of her two divine children versus Niobe's mortal 14. Children kill children, and the mothers witness the destruction, one to her satisfaction, and the other to her ruin.

Apollo reaches Thebes and kills each of Niobe's sons as the youths are in the midst of various activities. As Apollo's quills find and slay them, each boy is identified by name and recreation. The first dies while riding his horse. Apollo shoots two boys, oiled and wrestling, with one single arrow. The boys die while still embracing one another, *pectora pectoribus*.<sup>19</sup> The last of the boys to die has enough time to implore the gods to spare him ("*parcite!*");<sup>20</sup> however, while time allows the plea, it is too late for the arrow. Apollo hears the youth's cries and is moved by the entreaties only after the quill has been released. This last boy dies of the shallowest wound: the arrow piercing his heart. The Theban oracle rushes to tell Niobe of the attack on her sons, and Niobe gets to the scene after all of the boys are dead. Upon hearing about the slaughter, Niobe's husband takes his own life.

17 Ov. *Met.* 6.182–83.

18 Ov. *Met.* 6.204–06, emphasis mine.

19 Ov. *Met.* 6.243.

20 Ov. *Met.* 6.264.

Niobe then appeals to Latona's mercy, and yet, in her appeal, she can't help reminding Latona that even if the killing stops with the boys, Niobe still has more children than Latona. Much in the same way that Arachne rejected Pallas's warning, Niobe holds fast to her claim of superior motherhood while surrounded by the blood of her sons: "... *exsulta victrixque inimica triumpha! / cur autem victrix? miserae mihi plura supersunt, / quam tibi felici; post tot quoque funera vinco!*" ("you have triumphed! / What is this triumph? Still, in my great misery, / I am happier than you; for [even though there are so many] victims, I win [because I still have more children than you]!").<sup>21</sup> Not surprisingly, Niobe's vaunt is met with more arrows, this time Diana's, and Niobe witnesses all of her daughters die. Like the boys, Diana kills each girl one at a time. However, the girls' executions take up much less space on the page than their brothers' slayings. Readers do not learn Niobe's daughter's names or recreations. Also, unlike their brothers, the girls anticipate their end, and run to and fro, trying to avoid Diana's perfect aim. One daughter even runs towards Niobe as if to shield or comfort her mother from the horror and grief of watching her die. Finally, Niobe is left with only one daughter, whom she embraces while, without any hubris left, begging for her child's life. As an answer, an arrow pierces the body of the last daughter, still being held by the heartbroken mother. Children and husband gone, Niobe returns to her homeland and petrifies, the transformation directly resulting from her grief. Her body turns into stone that eternally weeps.

### 3 Wheatley's Reimagined Niobe

Phillis Wheatley's poem, "Niobe in Distress for her Children slain by Apollo, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book VI. and from a view of the Painting of Mr. Richard Wilson", embeds the Niobe myth within the combined milieu of Augustan Rome and mid-eighteenth-century Britain. Tracey L. Walters points out that "the title of Wheatley's poem underscores the poem's main subject: 'Niobe's distress after witnessing the massacre of her children'".<sup>22</sup> Wheatley's poem, therefore, focuses upon what Niobe feels when Latona demonstrates her power. Moreover, Wheatley's title identifies two different interpretations of an ancient myth – the distinctly Ovidian interpretation of the ancient myth of the Niobids as well as Wilson's oil painting of "The Destruction of the

<sup>21</sup> Ov. *Met.* 6.283–85.

<sup>22</sup> Tracy Walters, *African American Literature and the Classicist Tradition: Black Women Writers from Wheatley to Morrison* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 42.

Children of Niobe" (1760). Wilson's painting depicts Niobe in her still human form and reaching, in terror, towards her living daughters who are threatened by the stretched bows of Apollo and Diana. Two of Niobe's sons lie at her feet and three girls reach to the heavens, imploring the gods to have mercy. While her arms reach towards the girls, Niobe's eyes cast downward and away from them, forecasting the story's tragic end. The deep hues of the painting, its blues, greens, and greys, signify impending storms, and Mt. Sisypheus looms in the background, foreshadowing Niobe's grief-stricken transformation into stone. Wilson's dark and saturated oil on canvas leaves his audience caught where terror meets mourning. Wheatley mirrors this suspended state of loss in her version of the Niobe myth – one that challenges Ovid's retelling and also leaves her audience contemplating the cries of a mother who witnesses the destruction of her children. Conspicuously, Wheatley ends the poem amid this action, with Niobe imploring Latona rather than having Niobe frozen in stone, as Ovid did. In this, the poem freezes at the high point of maternal horror and within the midst of profound grief.

*Poems on Various Subjects* spends much of its "column space" on poems of loss and mourning. The thirty-fourth poem in a published collection of 39, "Niobe in Distress" follows a poem dedicated to paternal suffering – a father's loss of an adult daughter. At least fourteen of the poems in the collection are memorial poems that highlight the relationships between those lost and those who have survived these losses. Three of the poems are dedicated to parents who lost infants, another three to mothers or fathers losing children of different ages. It is fitting, then, that the classical story of child death and maternal mourning lands in this collection. However, and despite the variety of memorial poems in the collection, Niobe's story of mass loss comes directly after a poem dedicated not to a mother's grief but to paternal bereavement.

One of the two poems that precedes "Niobe" counts the various virtues of a young woman lost to her parents. "To the Hon. T.H. Esq; on the Death of his Daughter" attempts to sooth the father's devastation by counting the memories of the daughter: "Let Recollection take a tender part, / Assuage the raging tortures of your heart, / Still the wild tempest of tumultuous grief, / And pour the heav'nly nectar of relief".<sup>23</sup> The poem goes on to describe Hubbard's daughter as: "free from scornful pride ... [with] Unfailing charity, [and] unbounded love".<sup>24</sup> Because of her virtue, now the daughter finds herself in Heaven, free from earthly struggles, finally joined with her late husband, and ever watchful of her loving parents. The poem suggests that the recollection of the daughter

23 Wheatley, ll. 5–8.

24 Wheatley, ll. 11–14.

serves as a soothing memorial for the parents – a step in the mourning process never afforded to Niobe, who becomes frozen in her grief.<sup>25</sup>

Directly following “Niobe”, the poem “To S.M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works” lauds the work of Scipio Moorehead, the black and enslaved painter and poet who created the famous engraving of Wheatley that was published as the frontispiece of *Poems on Various Subjects* and in subsequent republished collections of Wheatley’s work. Ivy Wilson argues of this poem: “Wheatley’s use of classical references was a way for her to limn a revolutionary aesthetic, figured here as something embodied by America but not contained by it.”<sup>26</sup> Moorehead’s art gives the narrator of the poem, “the *Afric* muse”, perhaps Wheatley herself, “souls delight.”<sup>27</sup> The narrator of the poem goes on to acknowledge Moorehead’s influence on her pen: “... may the painter’s and the poet’s fire / To aid thy pencil, and they verse conspire! / And may the charms of each seraphic theme / Conduct thy footsteps to immortal fame!”<sup>28</sup> For the speaker in the poem, the relationship between the poet and the painter as they mutually focus on “deathless glories” lead to immortality and inevitable recognition of their genius, despite their subject positions as black and living in bondage in eighteenth-century Boston.<sup>29</sup> According to John C. Shields in *The American Aeneas*, through “To S.M.”, “Wheatley unabashedly informs the world that African Americans can produce paintings, just as whites can.”<sup>30</sup> Moreover, and through her reference to Virgil’s eighth eclogue in “To S.M.”, “Wheatley subversively insists that, just as a slave can rival a white man’s poetic output, a slave can also challenge a white painter’s sophistication.”<sup>31</sup>

25 According to Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the slave-holding and slave-peddling Hubbard served the inquisition during the authenticity trial for Wheatley’s book, (15). Gates’s assessment has been critiqued as conjectural rather than historical. However, if he is right, the speaker of the poem’s compassion for the father’s suffering potentially serves as an element of irony in the historical reception of *Poems of Various Subjects* in the US, for which, see Brooks (1982). According to Wheatley’s biographer, Vincent Carretta, *Phillis Wheatley: Biography of a Genius in Bondage* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014), Hubbard lived on the same street as the Wheatleys. Both Brooks and Carretta agree that Hubbard signed an authentication document that became a part of the context for the publication of *Poems on Various Subjects*.

26 Ivy Wilson, “The Writing on the Wall: Revolutionary Aesthetics and Interior Spaces”, *American Literature’s Aesthetic Dimensions*, edited by Cindy Weinstein and Christopher Looby, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 56–72: 167.

27 Wheatley, l. 5.

28 Wheatley, ll. 9–12.

29 Wheatley, l. 8.

30 Shields, *American Aeneas*, 127.

31 Shields, *American Aeneas*, 127.

"Niobe in Distress", then, situated in Wheatley's collection between poetic discussion of child loss and African creative production, frames Wheatley's portrayal of Niobe as commentary on the peculiarities of black maternal subjectivity and the gendered context under which she produced African/African-American artwork. Demonstrating her critical reading abilities along with her poetic competency, Wheatley alters the Ovidian Niobe story – shifting her audience's focus rather than changing any events within the myth. Niobe remains haughty about the number of her children. She interrupts the Theban women and convinces them to put down their laurels, which inflames Latona's fury. However, Wheatley changes the Ovid in three ways: 1) poetic form, when Wheatley writes "Niobe" as an epyllia with heroic couplets and in iambic pentameter; and 2) content, when Latona identifies Niobe's sentiments and the actions of the Theban women as "rebellion"; and 3) resolution, when Wheatley does not describe Niobe transforming into stone but ends the poem with Niobe still holding the cooling body of her dead daughter:

One only daughter lives, and she the least;  
The queen close clasp'd the daughter to her breast:  
"Ye heav'nly pow'rs, ah spare me one", she cry'd,  
"Ah! spare me one", the vocal hills reply'd:  
"In vain she begs, the Fates her suit deny,  
"In her embrace she sees her daughter die".<sup>32</sup>

The original 1773 printing of *Poems on Various Subjects* ends the poem with the above lines. An additional stanza was added to the end of the poem at a later date and with conspicuous quotation marks,<sup>33</sup> Niobe transformed, and the following note: "This verse to the end is the work of another hand".<sup>34</sup> The changes to form seem inevitable because of the intersection of literary trend and classic mimetic practice – meaning by the latter, the rewriting of previously written works into more modern forms. However, through these collective changes, Wheatley significantly complicates Niobe's presumed motivations. Wheatley's Niobe is a woman whose very claim to her children *is the act* of rebellion. She no longer stands as a memorial to a mother's grief. Like the Niobe in Wilson's painting, she emerges reconstituted in flesh and blood, her grief warm, breathing, and palpable.

<sup>32</sup> Wheatley, ll. 207–212.

<sup>33</sup> The collection entitled *Poems of Phillis Wheatley: A Native African and a Slave* (originally published in 1838) included the additional stanza.

<sup>34</sup> Wheatley, *Poems*, 1.

The problem for Wheatley is not only that Niobe staked her claim of worship-worthiness on the day of Latona's feast. Rather, the problem is that she would claim her children at all. In a world of Roman mythology, certainly, one's claim to anything is, at best, precarious. The gods often create high stakes for humans as a result of their petty and jealous whims. At any time, they could be listening. But, if there were any day that Latona would have her ears and sights upon Thebes, it would be her feast day. As a result, Latona hears Niobe claim her noble heritage and the children that prove her goddess status. Niobe's "pride" exceeds Latona's tolerance and her "rebel mind" must be whipped. Latona's punishment performs double work: it removes the source of Niobe's pride and also tempers the mind that would rebel against her.

The children not only follow the condition of their mother, but also serve as the bodies upon which their mother's punishment is enacted. Latona enforces a twofold punishment: she punishes Niobe, directly, for her impudence and also punishes the children as an extension of their mother. Latona demonstrates her power by sending Apollo and Diana to do her bidding; to Niobe and all of the women who ceased preparations for her feast, she proves that her two children hold more power than all of Niobe's. The only bodies at genuine risk in this war between two mothers are the children's. Acting as proxies for their mothers, the children embody the will or lack of will of their mothers.

#### 4 Niobe's Rebellion, Hubris, and Claim to Human Value

Wheatley's poetic form keeps Niobe couched in the epic tradition. In the popular style of eighteenth-century poetry, and particularly the rewriting of Greek and Roman works by Alexander Pope and John Dryden, Wheatley does not pull Niobe out of the epic form, but rather modernizes her and shifts her directly into a contemporary context. In Wheatley's work, Niobe becomes a symbolic rebellious eighteenth-century black heroine – foreign-born, full of pride, and challenging the inequality between herself and powers that control her.

Honoring Ovid's interest in female hubris, Wheatley stresses the Turkish-born Theban queen's prideful love for her children as her motivation for her crimes against Latona, Apollo, and Diana.

Where'er I turn my eyes vast wealth I find.  
 Lo! here an empress with a goddess join'd.  
 What, shall a *Titaness* be deify'd,  
 To whom the spacious earth a couch den'd?  
 Nor heav'n, nor earth, nor sea receiv'd your queen,

'Till pitying *Delos* took the wand'rer in.  
 Round me what a large progeny is spread!  
 No frowns of fortune has my soul to dread.  
 What if indignant she decrease my train  
 More than *Latona's* number will remain?<sup>35</sup>

Wealth, pedigree, and number of children account for Niobe's claim to worship. She builds a case against the preparations for Latona's feast and challenges the standards governing religious deference. William Cook and James Tatum point out that in Ovid's version, Niobe implicates and condemns the Theban women: "Ovid characterizes the [hubris] of Niobe quite directly, and gives greater space to her obnoxious comments, including her anger at the Theban women for daring to honor Latona rather than herself".<sup>36</sup> For Cook and Tatum, then, Ovid's Niobe acts thoughtlessly and through her emotions. However, Wheatley reframes Niobe's actions further as [mis]calculated insurrection, repeating the words "rebel" and "rebellion" together three times in Latona's quoted speech.

While most classical reception critics accept Niobe as merely and foolishly prideful, Latona's words in Wheatley's poem and the presence of Arachne's story in Ovid's poem both stress Niobe's interruption of the feast as rebellion, rather than an act of hubris. And yet, while she does thwart the feast preparations, the women do not begin to worship Niobe. Wheatley paints the scene of Niobe's rebellion:

["]Then hence, ye *Theban* dames, hence haste away,  
 No longer off'rings to *Latona* pay?  
 Regard the order of *Amphion's* spouse,  
 And take the leaves of laurel from your brows".  
*Niobe* spoke. The *Theban* maids obey'd,  
 Their brows unbound, and left the rights unpaid.<sup>37</sup>

Ovid's version of the same moment in the story unfolds:

"quis furor auditos" inquit "praeponere visis  
 caelestes? aut cur colitur Latona per aras,  
 numen adhuc sine ture meum est? mihi Tantalus auctor,

35 Wheatley, ll. 73–82.

36 Cook and Tatum, *African American Writers*, 42.

37 Wheatley, ll. 83–88.

cui licuit soli superorum tangere mensas;  
 [...]
   
 ite – satis pro re sacri – laurumque capillis  
 ponite!” deponunt et sacra infecta relinquunt,  
 quodque licet, tacito venerantur murmure numen.<sup>38</sup>

[“What madness is this?” she asked, “to prefer what you cannot see  
 in heaven? Or why is Latona worshiped at the altars;  
 When my incense is still unlit? I have Tantalus,  
 The only mortal ever allowed to touch the table [of the gods, on  
 Mt. Olympus];

[...]
   
 Quickly, go! Cast off your laurel  
 wreaths”. And they [the Theban women] left their sacrifices unfinished  
 to the goddess whom they still [secretly] worshiped.]

In both Ovid and Wheatley, there is no evidence that Niobe desires that Theban women worship her. Despite her complaint (“When my incense is still unlit?”), Niobe focuses more on disrupting Latona’s rites and questioning the requisite elements for divinity than achieving worship for and of herself. However, the Theban women in Ovid’s rendition leave the scene still desiring to worship Latona, although keeping it to themselves, whispering Latona’s rites as protests under their breaths (“tacito venerantur *murmure* numen”, my italics). Ovid’s Theban women do not fully ascribe to the change in the system of worship, but do what they are told, in part because Niobe reminds them of her earthly powers while standing before them. Latona’s absence enables and inflames Niobe’s rebellion – just as slave rebellions were more likely to occur in spaces with absentee or outnumbered landowners. Wheatley’s Theban women do not protest Niobe’s instruction. Instead, in her version of Thebes, the women simply take off their laurels and abandon their stations. In short, Wheatley’s Niobe more successfully instigates Theban rebellion against Latona. Casting off the laurels, the physical symbols of deity worship,<sup>39</sup> the Theban women release themselves from the rites of the goddess and signify unity with Niobe’s rebellion. Freeing their heads (and minds) from the confines of Latona – the unseen “new sprung deity” – the Theban women set themselves free.<sup>40</sup> Again,

38 Wheatley, ll. 170–73, 201–03.

39 Gruen, Erich S. *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 10.

40 Wheatley, l. 65.



returning to the legacy of rebellion begun by Arachne, Niobe's actions disrupt and challenge the order established by the gods. Niobe challenges the value system that makes Latona worthy of worship, and rebels against a system that keeps intact an arbitrary hierarchy.

Throughout *Metamorphoses*, Ovid accuses the gods of any variety of arbitrary crimes that directly affect the lives and often the very corporeality of humans. Arachne's tapestry serves as a summary of some of these crimes and particularly accents those violent crimes against women. When discussing twentieth-century African American adaptations of Homer's work, Patrice Rankine reminds us that "classical authors who adapted Homer's characters were writing under one regime or other: a religious order in which man is subject to capricious gods; an autocratic regime; or even an ostensibly egalitarian, democratic rule that denies the humanity of a foreign woman".<sup>41</sup> Rankine argues that the works of Ralph Ellison and Toni Morrison respond not only to the plotlines and forms of works by Aeschylus and Sophocles, but also to the factors influencing these latter authors' revisions to Homer. So it is with Wheatley. For instance, Wheatley shares a version of exile that Ovid also experienced in his lifetime. Ovid wrote *Metamorphoses* under the reign of Caesar Augustus and found himself in exile during the last ten years of his life and career.<sup>42</sup> Wheatley held a precarious position of forced exile from her place of birth and then as enslaved and somewhat adopted. Both Ovid and Wheatley stress Niobe's foreignness. As one of "Afric's sable race", foreign born, enslaved in the northern United States, and denied the acumen for verse layered with "sentiment", Wheatley held a foreign subject position in the United States not unlike Niobe in ancient Thebes. In the midst of the historical corruption of motherhood through chattel slavery, Wheatley conjures American images of the foreign mother who ultimately possesses no control over the fate of her children.

Like her countrywoman, Arachne, Niobe denies the system that would subordinate her to a goddess and deny her self-defined social value. She does not desire to be put in the place of Latona, but rather challenges the notion that Latona would be in a place above her. As Wheatley's Latona observes, Niobe desires equalization.

[*"*Niobe sprung from *Tantalus* inspires  
Each *Theban* bosom with rebellious fires;

41 Patrice Rankine, *Ulysses in Black: Ralph Ellison, Classicism, and African American Literature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 38.

42 Anderson, William S. *Ovid: The Classical Heritage* (New York: Routledge, 2014), xii.

No reason her imperious temper quells,  
 But all her father in her tongue rebels;  
 Wrap her own sons for her blaspheming breath,  
*Apollo!* wrap them in the shades of death".  
*Latona* ceas'd, and ardent thus replies,  
 The God, whose glory decks th' expanded skies.  
 "Cease thy complaints, mine be the task assign'd  
 To punish pride, and scourge the rebel mind".  
 This *Phæbe* join'd. – They wing their instant flight;<sup>43</sup>

Niobe continues her family's legacy of human sacrifice and blasphemy, initially shown by her father, Tantalus, who sacrificed his own child and fed the baby to the gods in Olympus. As a reversal of Tantalus's story, Niobe's children will die as her punishment and simultaneously serve as the sacrifice to Latona on her feast day – the human sacrifice for which the gods once punished Tantalus.

Sacrifice does not lead to Niobe's redemption, but rather to her being fixed in agony and condemned to eternal suffering. Ovid's Niobe becomes frozen in her agony, transformed into eternally weeping stone, a monument to her hubris and to Latona's power. More than expressing her "indignance" upon hearing Niobe's insults, Wheatley's Latona accuses her of inspiring "rebellious fires" in the Theban women. Latona acknowledges the danger in Niobe's influence, and ties that to Niobe's paternity. For Latona, Niobe continues in her father's custom: she disrupts the sanctity of the gods' rule and steps above her place, thereby threatening the entire system. Within the context of the Atlantic slave trade, the Tantalus story acquires new resonance: Tantalus feeds his son's body to the gods as African slave traders feed the international slavery industry with the sons and daughters of Africa. Niobe inherits from Tantalus a legacy of rebellion against hierarchy and oppression, but not one without consequences.

Tantalus desecrates the Olympian table by serving his son, an insult after being invited as the first and only human to dine with the gods. This act complicates the notion of Tantalus as a "rebel" against the gods. Instead of only defying or defiling the gods by feeding the gods his son, Tantalus, like Arachne, reveals the gods' collective relationship with humanity: Gods consume the bodies of people, and particularly women, through sexual and other acts of violence. Wheatley's poetry exposes the complex relationship between human worship and the all-consuming gods. Following the rites of the gods, Christian or Greek, means saving one's life. Rebellion from the gods, from the system

43 Wheatley, ll. 95–105.

that enslaves you, means revealing the flaws in the system. Thus, while Latona claims that Niobe follows in her father's image, Wheatley suggests that the mother/daughter relationship between Latona and Niobe bears a close family resemblance and draws sharp correlations between the goddess and the rebellious queen.

## 5 Conclusion: The Niobe Poetics of Precarious Black Authorship

By punishing Niobe, the goddess Latona reminds Niobe of her foreign birth and, therefore, of Niobe's illegitimate claim of motherhood in Thebes. If Niobe is not a Theban woman, then she cannot be a Theban mother. Moreover, Latona lays her claim to all of the children in Thebes, as its rightful goddess. Niobe's greatest crime is the very act of claiming her children as her own and taking pride in the sheer number of children that she has. Wheatley's position as both African-born and Niobe-author remains inextricable from the chattel system that binds Wheatley – the very system that ostensibly ripped her from the arms of her foreign mother.

The progenitor of the African American literary tradition and of U.S. Black Classicism, alike, Wheatley also began a tradition of literary exploration of US slave motherhood. Like the title character in Frances E.W. Harper's "The Slave Mother" (1854), Wheatley's Niobe discovers, in the end, that her children are "not hers, for cruel hands / May rudely tear apart / The only wreath of household love / That binds her breaking heart".<sup>44</sup> Wheatley's Niobe loudly begs Latona to "spare [her] one" child and thereby opens the space in which the wails of Harper's slave mother echo. Within the U.S. slave system, which legislated that the slave-born follow the condition of the mother, Wheatley's Niobe poem reflects themes of tragic motherhood that would emerge again in the slave narratives of Harriet Jacobs (1861) and Frederick Douglass (1845) as well as in the fiction of Pauline Hopkins (1906). In this canon of literature that discusses mothers bought and sold, "'mother' and 'enslavement' are indistinct categories of the illegitimate".<sup>45</sup> Therefore, if we understand Niobe as an enslaved mother, her hubris lies within her assumptions of motherhood rights and her inexperience with one goddess presiding over Thebes. The poem replicates the growing plantation populace in Wheatley's contemporary moment – the small

44 Harper, Frances Ellen Watkins. *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects* (J.B. Yerrinton & Son, printers, 1855), 7–9.

45 Spillers, Hortense J. *Black, White, and in Color: Essays on American Literature and Culture* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 75.

white family who wields power over a large population of enslaved black persons. If Niobe symbolizes the black enslaved mother, Latona serves as power dictating the position of slave. For Wheatley, Latona is the United States whose guns, will, and re-casting of African slavery bends the black body to achieve her goals. Latona is the agent of Atlantic Slavery: the torturer-slave-master whose children serve as intermediaries between herself and the slave population.

Ultimately, Wheatley's "Niobe", provides a model of the power dynamics that surrounded the fates of the fruit of her creative production. In other words, as Niobe struggles to but cannot control what happens to her children, Wheatley also could not control what happened to her literary children: her poems. In *African Americans and the Classics: Antiquity, Abolition and Activism*, Margaret Malamud reminds us that: "Before Phillis Wheatley could publish her poems, she needed subscribers" but failed to acquire enough from Boston.<sup>46</sup> To critique Wheatley's work, one must consider the surveillance that she lived under, writing, living, and being a "servant" in John and Susanna's household and within the Boston slavery context. With this in mind, I suggest that Wheatley's relationship to her enslavers as well as the various narratives wrapped around the authentication of her text undermine the Niobe Poetics that Wheatley asserts through "Niobe". The contemporary as well as historical sanitizing of Wheatley's biography further reifies the power structures that supported her actual enslavement and, therefore, the legible editorial interference in the collection. Despite Wheatley's moves toward and arguments for authority and therefore the right to her own production, her position as enslaved and surveilled overdetermine the immediate failure of her rebellion. And yet, even within this "failure", the very act of claiming her children, the very act of writing her black feminine critical poems and releasing them into the world, pushes against the power structures that demand her servitude.

Through her Niobe Poetics, Wheatley released to an international reading public a critique of the lengths to which the powerful go to reinforce their power. Her efforts "presented Wheatley with an immediate opportunity for freedom as opposed to an indeterminate future".<sup>47</sup> Her U.S. slave owners, editors, writers of authenticating documents, and those critics who dismiss her for race treachery seemed to miss the larger implications of "Niobe in Distress". Despite those who would thwart her rebellion and like Niobe who turns into

46 Margaret Malamud, *African Americans and the Classics: Antiquity, Abolition and Activism* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 14.

47 John Levi Barnard, *Empire of Ruin: Black Classicism and American Imperial Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 53.

a stony mountainside that will exist for millennia, Wheatley and her critical artistic production persist.

So what's at stake for this argument? More and more, undergraduate and graduate students want to know the practical application or political ramifications of our historical and literary analysis. This essay is about Phillis Wheatley and the "Niobe Poetics" that emerge in her black classicist production. However, as a scholar primarily invested in Black Studies, I would be remiss if I did not also address the ways that African American Studies often does not engage directly with the classicism in black-authored texts, and, conversely, how classicists actively eschew black-authored neoclassicism or the history of the African American study of classical texts. As a result, African American studies elides the complex re-imaginings of black worlds through the classical lens – the very lens that black authors, educated in classical Liberal Arts, used to speculate upon black life, politics, and their rapidly-changing subject positions. Meanwhile, Classics misses opportunities to see classical texts through non-white interpretations and scholarship that would, inevitably, provide a fuller understanding of *ur*-texts – just as Shakespeare and Milton lend to the area of study. To this point, I challenge non-black classicists to engage with black classicists so that they might learn more about the very work that they study just as they might look to early modern and other white European and American neoclassicism as a means of exploring nuances within classical texts that have otherwise been missed or ignored. In part, I join a small but growing group of Black Classicist critics to address Wheatley's blackness and her classicism. As pointed out for decades by the essential black feminist classicist, Shelley P. Haley, there is nothing surprising about black classicists, as black folks have participated in dialogic relationships with classical texts since they have come into contact with them.

My analysis of Wheatley aims to fill in some of the pieces still missing from the body of scholarship addressing her work, specifically the inherent rebellion revealed through her classical content and form – a rebellion mistaken for *only* hubris by any number of white critic-artists from the Middle Ages through the Early Modern period<sup>48</sup> and often through a lens of Christian ideology, extending into modern times, perhaps most famously by Walter Benjamin.<sup>49</sup> Moreover, as the area of Classics wrestles with its ongoing investment in white supremacy – the result of both the historical and contemporary

48 See at least: Akbari, Suzanne Conklin. "Ovid and Ovidianism". *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

49 Benjamin, Walter. "Critique of Violence". In *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, 291–316. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2019.

dearth of non-white classicists as well as the appropriation of classical art by self-described and proud white supremacists – embracing and taking seriously the works of black neoclassicist artists and classicists offers potential models for undermining the ongoing strains of racism within the discipline.

The politics that both gave rise to Black Studies and informed initial Wheatley criticism helped to discourage the study of Black Classicism. The nationalist politics of the Black Arts Movement and the early days of Black Studies discounted seemingly Eurocentric perspectives on black art. This tension, born from the legitimate efforts to redefine and recover black identity, pride, and power on the heels of the Civil Rights era resulted in a nearly wholesale rejection of Wheatley's work, branding her work antithetical to Black Power and a Black Aesthetic, the essence of which must criticize whiteness and anti-blackness. Most famously, in a 1962 essay entitled, "The Myth of a Negro Literature", Amiri Baraka, then LeRoi Jones, asserted the mediocrity of early black writers, with few exceptions.<sup>50</sup> Wheatley, and the work that she did as the first black person to ever be published in the U.S., transformed expectations of what a black person could do both intellectually and artistically. For this reason alone, Wheatley is part of the black-nationalist tradition, even if she was not deliberately producing black-nationalist work. Instead, I suggest that Wheatley's work begins a tradition of critical black literature within the U.S. context that eventually gives rise to the Black Arts Movement; Niobe Poetics encapsulates the state of this precarity as well as the resistance to it, and it continues to this day. By rejecting Wheatley's work as too supplicant to white supremacy, her mid-twentieth-century critics contributed to her marginalization in ways also reflected and performed by agents of the white supremacy that they fought against. At the same time, the post-Civil Rights, Afrocentric politics of the 1960s, 70s, and early 80s provides enough of a context to understand why representative critics could not assist in the project of recovering the author of "On Being Brought from Africa to America" – a poem which paints Africa as uncivilized and identifies slavery as redemptive, saving the narrator's soul by introducing her to Christianity. The project of Black Power left no room for a poet who lauded the system of slavery as salvific of her from her African, "Pagan roots".

The black critics who rejected Wheatley worked to protect themselves and other black people from narratives of savagery and inhumanity, often through

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50 For additional discussion of Black Arts Movement development and criticism, see Algernon Austin, *Achieving Blackness: Race, Black Nationalism, and Afrocentrism in the Twentieth Century* (New York: NYU Press, 2006) and David Lionel Smith, "The Black Arts Movement and Its Critics", *American Literary History* 3, no. 1 (1991): 93–110.

a re-inscription of Africa as the seat of human civilization, royalty, and superiority, both artistic and intellectual. Part of the recovery of black persons was a restoration of Africa and black Americans to this reimagined context. I revisit Wheatley's work within a classicist context as it intersects with Black Studies critique. And like the repetition within neoclassicism, as Wheatley rewrites Ovid who rewrote Virgil who rewrote Homer, I am here to re-insert Wheatley into the Black Studies conversation as a black critic of American slavery and the classics. As Brittney Cooper argues in *Beyond Respectability: The Intellectual Thought of Race Women*, critics should deeply engage the intellectual and creative productions of women whose politics may not fully translate into the contemporary moment, here I engage with Wheatley's black classicist poetry to show how Wheatley's "Niobe", offers a distinctly black feminine political critique.

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## William Apess and the Athens of America

*Matthew Duquès*

From 1835 to 1837, a Pequot Indian and Methodist minister named William Apess travelled around the northeastern seaboard of the United States delivering a lecture at public venues in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, Boston and Worcester, Massachusetts, New York City, Washington, D.C., and likely other cities.<sup>1</sup> The lecture, entitled *Eulogy on King Philip*, was Apess's attempt to garner support for the region's indigenous peoples, many of whose lives and livelihoods were in jeopardy thanks to recent, racist state and federal policies of removal. With the aim of rousing listeners to his cause, Apess identified and commented upon patterns of English violence toward American Indians that the English themselves recorded during their initial American incursions in *Eulogy*. He then launched into a celebration of the life of the well-known, main subject of the eulogy: King Philip, a Wampanoag leader who brought together and led north-eastern tribal nations during a late-seventeenth century New England conflict with English colonists known as King Philip's War. Apess hoped such a revealing commemoration lecture would, as he put it, "melt the prejudice that exists in the hearts of those who are in the possession of his [Philip's] soil" and "vindicate the character of him [Philip] who yet lives in their [Indians'] hearts" (73). Paying close attention to Apess's rhetoric, scholars have shown how his lecture incisively critiqued the project of English settler colonization by countering widely-accepted historical narratives about morally upstanding, triumphant English colonists and devious, vanishing Indians. Apess, these scholars explain, drew on modern Christian and indigenous philosophies to disrupt prevailing settler ideology and to articulate vital indigenous sovereignty. Barry O'Connell, Maureen Konkle, Cheryl Walker, and Rochelle Zuck, among others, have put more emphasis on the first of these moves (disruption) by showing how Apess critiques Western juridical,

1 References to Apess's works are from William Apess, *Son of the Forest and other Writings* ed. Barry O'Connell (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997). Recent information about Apess's tour can be found in Drew Lopenzina, *Through an Indian's Looking Glass: A Cultural Biography of William Apess, a Pequot* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2017).

evangelical, and racial ideas.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, Lisa Brooks and Drew Lopenzina have recently placed greater emphasis on the second of these moves (articulation) by demonstrating how Apess laid out indigenous ideas: Algonquian communalist-environmentalist notions of the common pot and an Iroquoian theory of justice, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Taking *Eulogy* in a new direction, this chapter shows how the success of Apess's lecture hinged upon the Pequot minister's ability to debunk a prevalent, Romantic-era conception of ancient Greece.<sup>4</sup> A positive, we might say platonic, conception of ancient Greece tintured Apess's audiences' conception of their nation as an empire and their views of indigenous people, clouding their interpretations of commemorative speeches like *Eulogy on King Philip*. Over the course of the long eighteenth century, archaeological findings, along with new humanist ideas and lectures based upon them, had transported ancient Greece into the limelight as a source of inspiring rumination. A neo-classical construction of modern philosophy, art, and architecture often along the reputed contours of exemplary Athenian life occurred in central Europe and then stretched into the Americas.<sup>5</sup> While this process was already evident in the literature of the American colonies as they sought independence near the end of the eighteenth century, it only truly flourished during the first half of the nineteenth century as a now-independent nation revisited its colonial history and sought a sense of shared identity on Western terms. Carl J. Richard labels this period the golden age of classicism, or the epoch when "the reception of ancient Greco-Roman culture reached its veritable height in

2 Barry O'Connell observes that Apess possessed an "impressive command of the intellectual culture of Euro-America" (page xvii); Maureen Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the Politics of Historiography, 1827–1863* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2004); Cheryl Walker, *Indian Nation: Native American Literature and Nineteenth Century Nationalisms* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Rochelle Zuck, "William Apess, the 'Lost Tribes,' and Indigenous Survivance". *Studies in American Indian Literatures* 25.1 (2013): 1–26.

3 Lisa T. Brooks, *The Common Pot: The Recovery of Native Space he Northeast* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2008); Lopenzina, *Through an Indian's Looking Glass*; See also Clayton Zuba, "Apess' *Eulogy* and the Politics of Native Visualcy". *Early American Literature*. 52.3 (2017) 651–77 and Jean O'Brien *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians Out of Existence in New England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). Both Zuba and O'Brien reconcile differing interpretations of *Eulogy*.

4 In making this illustration, I am indebted to David Treuer's recommendation that we read Native American literature, as we would all literature, for multiple, unexpected influences. See David Treuer, *Native American Fiction: A User's Manual* (Minneapolis: Graywolf Press, 2006).

5 Christopher Phillips, *The Course of Epic in American Culture, Settlement to Reconstruction* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2012).

popularity” in the United States.<sup>6</sup> Renovations of the new nation’s north-eastern cities as intended American iterations of ancient Athens, Richards notes, were being finished and public celebrations and commemorations in English were constructed using classical Greek models. Moreover, according to Caroline Winterer, students in this antebellum period were more commonly taught to feel for the utter strangeness of the first Greek epics and tragedies, adding an affective component as well as a wider curriculum to the grammar school tradition built on Latin recitations.<sup>7</sup> Such highly visible and potent U.S. Hellenism shaped expectations of Apress’s audiences in complex ways. Yoking bowdlerized figures, structures, and concepts from Greek antiquity to a newly-minted, postcolonial metanarrative of Western progress helped citizens and non-citizens remain indifferent toward historic English colonial violence and at arm’s length from truths about indigenous people. But its pretensions to a more natural, less Latinate state also provided a crucial heuristic for questioning the hypocritical effects of settler colonization. Grasping how Apress navigated the period’s Hellenistic trends helps clarify the disruptive politics of his lecture. Consideration of Apress’s responses to antebellum Hellenism, more generally, reveals how Apress addressed his audience’s assumptions, yielding greater insight into what success he might have had in his urgent cause. Such an approach shows his lecture to be an important contribution to a trans-hemispheric history of indigenous people working with classical texts during early modernity.<sup>8</sup>

## 1 Apress’s “Greek” Opening

*Eulogy on King Philip* begins with references to famed fourth-century BCE father and son, Philip II of Macedon and Alexander the Great, whose names William Apress folds strategically into a series of negations. Privileging these two ancient male conquerors, Apress declares,

6 Carl J. Richard, *The Gold Age of the Classics in America: Greece, Rome and the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

7 Caroline Winterer, *The Culture of Classicism: Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life, 1780–1910* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002).

8 See Andrew Laird, *Aztec Latin* (forthcoming, OUP New York) and also “Classical Learning and Indigenous Legacies in Sixteenth Century Mexico” in this collection. See also Thomas J. Keeline Jr. and Stuart McManus, “Benjamin Larnell, the Last Latin Poet at Harvard Indian College”, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* Vol. 108 (2015); and Hillary Wyss, *English Letters and Indian Literacies: Reading, Writing and New England Missionary Schools, 1750–1830* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012) 191.

I do not arise to spread before you the fame of a noted warrior whose natural abilities shone like those of the great and mighty Philip of Greece, or of Alexander the Great, or like those of Washington – whose virtues and patriotism are engraven on the hearts of my audience. Neither do I approve of war as being the best method of bowing to the haughty tyrant, Man, and civilizing the world. No, far from me be such a thought. (74)

Allusions to Philip of Greece and Alexander the Great push Apess's audience to question their expectations about a modern indigenous minister by conveying the following supplementary communiqué: though you might not think it, I *could* talk about the specific histories of Greece associated with the rise and fall of Athens as well as about revolutionary Anglo-American leaders associated with the Revolution. I know the details of these men, Apess indicates; I know, too, that in our epoch in the early U.S. it is common, too common in fact, to retell these deeds with a neoclassical sheen. And perhaps, most importantly, I know that in retelling these deeds in this fashion, *ad nauseam*, orators and poets alike are, in effect, promoting war as the justified means of upholding the idea of Western civilization. Couched in the terms of *praeteritio*, these first lines force his audience to re-evaluate their rights as settlers. For, as Apess sharpens his ethos and distances himself from "Western" figures who seem to contribute directly and indirectly (as ancient models) to the sense of a rising, morally-exceptional U.S. empire, the audience starts to see the relationship between themselves and these figures as learned rather than earned by birth right. Apess's authority and the audiences' impression of their lack of authority coincide primarily because Apess exposes their relation to these leaders as tenuous at best. In the passage cited above, Philip is "great and mighty"; Philip and Alexander are "noted" "warriors" with luminous "natural abilities"; Washington too is well known and possesses such inborn traits, but Apess, following contemporary neoclassical renderings of the nation's first President, construes him as "virtuous and patriotic", and he emphasizes that these Aeneas-like traits are "engraven on the hearts of my audience" (74).

The antebellum reception of Philip II and Alexander the Great helps convey the potential impact of the small yet significant adjectival differences in Apess's opening negations. The figures of Philip II and Alexander the Great, storied Argead leaders, had taken on new meaning in the U.S. In the beginning of the early modern period, well before the American Revolution, these two men were used by English and Anglo-American historians to frame a moral stance on new world colonization. Philip II and Alexander were typically painted as representative of the dangers of worldly ambition and conquest.

Such renditions stressed that they constituted a faulty (Macedonian, not truly Greek) political line. On xenophobic grounds, their empire-building activities indexed the decline rather than the height of the ancient polity and served as a warning to future empire-builders.<sup>9</sup> In the colonies, this view of Philip II can be gleaned indirectly through the positive representations of Demosthenes, the truth-to-power detractor of Philip II whom the famous Anglo-American Puritan poet, Anne Bradstreet, famously depicted as the “fluent sweet tuned Greek youth who lisped at first”.<sup>10</sup> This negative view of Philip and Alexander, however, would change over the course of the Enlightenment.<sup>11</sup> Ever inviting in their view of the Greeks, Romantic Hellenophiles in the U.S. pushed back against this representation and chose to cast Philip and Alexander more favourably, even going so far as to follow the German philosopher Friedrich Schiller and cast the two men as personifications of the pinnacle of Western civilization – the *arcana imperii* – or, the secret power of the Greek empire.<sup>12</sup> As the Romantics re-presented Philip and Alexander in a more positive light under an expanding Hellenic panorama, it is worth adding that their view of the opposition to Philip II, Demosthenes, stretched out too to accommodate a more forgiving image of Philip II and Alexander. Demosthenes became representative of an obsolete ascetic scholasticism, as in the comments of Pittsburgh novelist and judge and virulent anti-Indian thinker Hugh Henry Brackenridge, who disparages Demosthenes-like ancients for “shaving their heads and writing over eight times the history of Thucydides, and seemingly perfecting a style of oratory” (8). Or he was seen as a searing voice sadly pushed to the margins in current school curricula whose absence marked the birth of a reactionary

9 Histories covering the lives of Philip II and Alexander, which were available in the early U.S. include Temple Stanyan, *The Grecian History. From the End of the Peloponnesian War to the Death of Philip of Macedon. Containing the Space of Sixty-Eight Years* (vol. 1 published in 1707; vol. 2, London: J. and R. Tonson, 1739). Oliver Goldsmith, *The Grecian History, from the Earliest State to the Death of Alexander the Great* (London: J. and F. Rivington, T. Longman, G. Kearsley, W. Griffin, G. Robinson, et al., 1774). William Mitford, *The History of Greece* (vol. 1, London: T. Wright for J. Murray and J. Robson, 1784). John Gillies, *The History of Ancient Greece, Its Colonies and Conquests* (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1786).

10 Anne Bradstreet, “Prologue” in *The Works of Anne Bradstreet*, ed. Jeannine Hennsley (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2010) 7.

11 Philip and Alexander were the aliases of the 17th Wampanoag leaders Metacom (King Philip) and his brother Wamsutta (Alexander). This fact is likely the main reason Appess chose to reference them. But it is also worth noting that Metacom and Wamsutta’s decisions to name themselves after Philip and Alexander reflect a changing perspective on these two ancient leaders at the dawn of the Enlightenment in North America.

12 See Friedrich Schiller, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications 2004).

modern state. The Scottish writer Fanny Wright presents Demosthenes in this way in her Epicurean romance, *A Few Days in Athens* (1821) – a work she penned, it is worth noting, right after she wrote her popular American travelogue, which presents Indians as destined to vanish.

In *Eulogy*, William Apess seems to follow suit with his Romantic contemporaries, using what could be construed as genuine superlatives for Philip II (“great and mighty”). He appears to suggest, along with the mention of Washington, the post-revolutionary realization in America of the *translatio imperii et studii*. Apess, though, throws these classical figures aside in favor of another yet unnamed topic and another “thought”, one defined by his firm opposition to war. Including the distinctly Roman character and reception of Washington *contra* Philip II and Alexander the Great blocks his audience from the current affective national project of reclaiming the Greeks (and bypassing the Romans) for the purposes of an aesthetic education. Many listeners and subsequent readers of the lecture consequently likely experienced Apess’s adjectives, “great and mighty”, as ironic, flipping the script of the typical Western military and political hagiographies, which helped make them feel like entitled, modern American subjects. Apess’s torturous negation, in this way, served to prod them to question their provenance in America. In fact, it led them to entertain the idea that the ambitious Macedonians of Greek antiquity as well as the dutiful erstwhile *British* General, George Washington and his post-revolutionary subjects (the settler audience), were equally foreign sources of national corruption since they were all not indigenous.

## 2 *Eulogy and Pericles’s Funeral Oration*

Pericles’s Funeral Oration further illuminates how, for the sake of justice for indigenous people, Apess estranged his antebellum audiences’ expectations about their leaders, their wars, and public commemorations for the latter undertaken by the former. Delivered prior to the epoch of Philip II and Alexander the Great by the fifth century BCE Athenian statesman Pericles, the Funeral Oration is supposed to be a eulogy for the Greek soldiers who died during the first year of the Peloponnesian War. In the Oration, Pericles speaks extensively instead about the greatness of Athens, in its current state, while essentially speaking around the men who have fallen in recent battle – his ostensible main subject. Pericles explains his chosen focus on “the spirit in which we faced our trials and also our constitution and the way of life which has made us great” by asserting that it is “enough for their glories to be proclaimed in battle”. He adds that “the whole Earth is the sepulchre of illustrious men; and

their story is not graven only on Stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives". (151).<sup>13</sup> On these grounds, Pericles justifies his "wish" to avoid "mak[ing] a long speech on familiar subjects so I shall say nothing about the warlike deeds by which we acquired our power or the battles in which we or our fathers gallantly resisted our enemies, Greek or foreign". In short, he exempts himself from carrying through on his promise to briefly "speak in praise of the dead". While classicists have long debated the import as well as the veracity of Pericles's Oration, A.B. Bosworth argues convincingly that the address was appropriate for the time, place, and orator.<sup>14</sup> Confronting an Athenian audience made up largely of Athenian widows and disgruntled refugees from Attica, Pericles wanted to make a critical and unfamiliar, heterogeneous group feel like the "city is worth dying for" by eulogizing *it*. Pericles, Bosworth concludes, delivered a fitting, conservative, "timeless encomium" on Athens meant to inculcate the value of "self-control and moderation" in the face of general grief, fear, and confusion.

U.S. politicians up through the Civil War relied on Pericles's Funeral Oration as a model speech. The Oration offered modern leaders and their people a tested piece of rhetoric, which could be used to help frame a message to citizens and non-citizens who were frustrated by the deaths of soldiers near and dear to them. Put another way, if U.S. politicians wanted to temper the country's mourning practices for the supposed good of the new nation, they had a ready example, one that they discussed, even employed. The most famous example of such use can be found in the address at Gettysburg given by Edward Everett, former federal Indian Bureau administrator and Harvard professor of Greek. Everett evokes the "Athenian example", then proceeds to use Thucydides's language to launch his speech on the recent U.S. Civil War battle. As Jennifer T. Roberts notes in her discussion of Everett, though, his interest in Pericles's Oration as a template was part of a general cultural trend that began well before the war. Roberts explains that by the end of the eighteenth century, under the forgiving wreath of early U.S. Hellenism, earlier modern views of a "Plutarchan Pericles", or Pericles as a base populist gave sway to a "Thucydidean Pericles".<sup>15</sup> The leader of Athens, that is, came to be viewed more like the tempered, earnest character that the father of history repeatedly gave him: Pericles was, as Thucydides had it, a man with "intellectual gifts", a "general reputation"

13 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* trans. Rex Warner Penguin Classic, 1972.

14 A.B. Bosworth, "The Historical Context of Thucydides Funeral Oration" *Journal of Hellenic Studies* Vol. 120 (2000) 1–16.

15 Jennifer T. Roberts, "Pericles in America: The Founding Era and Beyond" in *Thomas Jefferson, the Classical World and Early America*, ed. Nicolas Cole and Peter Onuf (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 2011) 265–294.

chosen to deliver “an appropriate speech in praise of the dead” (Thucydides, 143). This image of Pericles became popular during an epoch when political and cultural leaders of the young nation needed good examples of classic speeches in which politicians might have successfully turned the profound grief caused by war casualties into a moderate sentiment that could be marshalled in the service of the polity. A rough past and an uncertain future for the U.S. spurred many of its leading citizens to see Pericles as a fit figure and to look to his funeral Oration in particular as a guide for inspiring audiences of grieving citizens and non-citizens, immigrants and indigenous people to restrain their feelings by forgetting about the messy and violent details of the past and remembering the benefits and privileges of their current as well as prospective national greatness.

While we do not know for certain if Apess read Pericles’s Oration during his studies, or even if he encountered and read it during his lifetime, there were important opportunities for him to encounter this speech or, at the very least, to learn about excerpts and revisions of it. First, Apess probably knew about the Periclean address that Edward Everett delivered on King Philip’s War, which the Harvard Professor of Hellenic Studies gave a year before Apess wrote *Eulogy*. If Apess did hear or read this speech, he was likely bothered by its author’s move to talk around the dead for the sake of an individual hero whose fortunes testified to the polity’s greatness above all else.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, he might have had cause to investigate the classical allusions in Everett’s speech and to puzzle over how a scholar of Greek’s academic expertise in golden-age Athens had informed his view of Indians. Second, as Apess worked on *Eulogy*, Apess scholar Barry O’Connell argues that he probably turned to popular antebellum author and reformer, Lydia Maria Child, for feedback on his lecture. If he did so, he would have made contact with Child while she was working on *Philothea: A Grecian Romance* (1836), a proto-feminist work of historical fiction in which Pericles played a prominent role. Highlighting his famously stirring rhetoric, Child presents the Athenian statesmen as an ethical leader beset by the people, war, and the plague. At a minimum, if Child did give Apess advice on his lecture, she might have suggested that he frame his eulogy using Periclean moves to improve its chances of changing his audiences’ minds.

Physical locations for Apess’s addresses also indicate that he had cause to think about a famous speech like Pericles’s Oration as he prepared to deliver

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16 Edward Everett, “An Address Delivered at Bloody Brook in South Deerfield September 30, 1835, in Commemoration of the Fall of the Flower of Essex at that Spot in King Philip’s War” Boston: Russell, Shattock, & Williams, 1835. See Konkle, Gallagher, and Lopenzina for differing readings of Everett and Apess.



his lecture. Affective U.S. encounters with ancient Greek texts and contexts thrived in urban spheres like Boston, New York, and Philadelphia during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Buildings and even entire portions of these cities were redesigned during this period along Greco-Roman models to inspire faith in growing, influential hubs, which were teeming with large immigrant and war veteran populations and experienced unprecedented disease outbreaks (yellow fever, cholera). The most common, more or less explicit, shorthand for these kinds of projects was Athens: turning Philadelphia into the Athens of America, Boston into the Athens of America, etc. Two of Apress's earliest performances of *Eulogy* occurred at the Odeon, a neoclassical theatre, which was designed to help carry out such a Hellenic campaign in Boston. As historian Thomas O'Connor explains, throughout the 1820s and 1830s, Boston's leading citizens banded together and re-envisioned the layout and architecture of their city so it offered the harmony and beauty of the golden-age Athenian polity on American soil.<sup>17</sup> The goal of this campaign, O'Connor explains, was to return cultural prominence to New England, a region whose cultural capital had been depleted by growth in New York and Philadelphia. O'Connor explains the complex effects of this Boston campaign in his discussion of the Odeon. This venue, whose name originally means a traditional Athenian singing place, opened its doors with its new name and neoclassical form to great excitement less than a year before Apress spoke there. It quickly became a celebrated site on account of its staging of numerous famous mid-century lectures and concerts, including the first Beethoven symphony performed in the U.S. At the same time, its opening was also met with considerable resistance. The construction of the Odeon and the gentrification of the surrounding neighborhood displaced many poor inhabitants, including Indians, who could no longer afford to live there. These Bostonians, O'Connor points out, protested.

Apress's *Eulogy* reveals that he most likely entered into this and other neoclassical arenas well apprised of these local debates and, at a minimum, inclined to be cognizant of the particulars of an oxymoronic urbanizing Hellenism. Surrounded by physical instances of modern neoclassicism, which hemmed Native Americans in so as to push them out of Western development, he exposed the infuriating idea that his ostensible white allies in the often intertwined spheres of architecture, politics, academia, reform, and popular culture were so invested in the regenerative idea of the Athenian polity as a model for making their cities great (again) that they were overlooking the impact of

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17 Thomas H. O'Connor, *The Athens of America: Boston, 1825–1845* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006).

such backward-looking reform. A reading of the rhetorical moves and aesthetics in the remainder of *Eulogy's* opening gambit reveals as much: that Apess mounted a counter-offensive to this mentality by reimagining the formal logic of the speech that hemmed him in: the Funeral Oration. Much like Pericles's Oration, Apess's *Eulogy* too contains a description of the characteristics of a polity and outlines the speaker's task of praising a select group of those who have died in battle. More specifically, while Apess never outright condemns rituals of military commemoration as Pericles does, he starts the lecture by laying out what his audiences encountered as a similarly jarring move, for Apess expresses his desire, as the appointed speaker of the day, to avoid well-worn topics: i.e., the long history of commemorations of military might, battles won, land acquired, and enemies resisted. Apess's assertion – following references to Philip, Alexander, and Washington – that he does *not* “approve of war as being the best method of bowing to the haughty tyrant, Man, and civilizing the world,” puts his audience in the same, initially uncomfortable position that ancient audiences might have found themselves in when they listened to the Oration (105). They had to question both the speaker as well as their own role in the act of commemoration. Were *they* default approvers of *all* war because they had risen to talk about or listen to someone speak on these subjects in public?

Apess's dramatic shift in the second paragraph of *Eulogy* to explain what he *will* speak about resembles the rhetorical moves found in the Funeral Oration, specifically the emphasis in the latter piece on the power of the unseen. Apess explains that, like Pericles, he will discuss less familiar subject matter. Apess says he “bring[s] before you beings made by the God of Nature, and in whose hearts and heads he has planted sympathies that shall live forever in the memory of the world” (105). These are people, he explains to his audience, whose “brilliant talents shone in the display of natural things, so that the most cultivated, whose powers shone with equal luster, were not able to prepare mantles to cover the burning elements of an uncivilized world” (105). Apess continues with a rhetorical question: “What then? Shall we cease to speak of the mighty of the earth, the noble work of God?” He then elaborates on the immorality of ongoing silence as the “elements of an uncivilized world” go on “burning,” leaving “purer virtues left untold,” and “noble traits” that lie “buried in the shade of night”. In these examples, we find Apess mobilizing both of Pericles's two key, contradictory yet ultimately complementary moves. On the one hand, Apess stresses a duty to voice what has always been known and felt yet left unarticulated. This stress is in line with Pericles's famous lines, that “the whole Earth is the sepulchre of illustrious men; and their story is not graven

only on Stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives" (15). On the other hand, we find Apress, through his rhetorical question, gesturing, much as Pericles does, against the inherently limited verbal conventions of military commemoration. As in the Oration, so too in *Eulogy*: the former move comes to dominate the remainder of the speech. We see this typified in a succeeding sentence when Apress first "appeal[s] to the few remaining descendants who now remain as the monuments of the cruelty of the errors of those who came to improve our race and correct our errors", and then foregrounds a powerful comparison for effect: just as

the immortal Washington lives endeared and engraven on the hearts of every white in America, never to be forgotten in time – even such is the immortal Philip honored, as held in memory by the degraded but yet grateful descendants who appreciate his character; so will every patriot, especially in this enlightened age, respect the rude yet all accomplished son of the forest, that died a martyr to his cause, though unsuccessful, yet as glorious as the American Revolution. (105)

With the phrase "monuments of the cruelty ..." and the stress in this passage on the imprint of Washington and King Philip on the hearts of white and Native people, respectively, Apress re-enacts a version of Pericles's claim, "the whole earth is the sepulchre of illustrious men". This reenactment helps Apress set up his excoriation of the treatment of Native people by settlers, his celebration of Philip, and his illustration of Native Americans' humanity to an audience whose rights often seemed to depend upon denying such humanity.

As these examples already begin to suggest, Apress's *Eulogy* also makes significant updates to Pericles's Oration. For one, Apress uses redirection to denature the bond between morality and strength upon which Pericles's view of his polity's constitution depends. According to the Oration, Athens has been "made ... *great*" [my emphasis], a positive, exceptional characteristic of the city-state, which Pericles sets about naturalizing in a speech meant for deceased soldiers whom, he declares, cannot ever be properly commemorated and whose "glories", he argues, already suffuse the lives of the audience. Apress's *Eulogy* underscores the idea that the U.S. has been *made* great through an unjust series of colonial developments, which he sets about denaturalizing by showing how the unseen acts of deceased soldiers unjustifiably and disproportionately receive praise, tincturing the perspective of the audience when it comes to indigenous people. Apress unearths a pattern among these

acts to show how this construction of a great U.S. has been a consistent moral liability for Christians rather than an asset for its citizens and non-citizens. He describes the violent logic of the historic acts of settler people who think

it no crime to wreak their vengeance upon whole nations and communities, until the fields are covered with blood and the rivers turned into purple fountains, while groans, like distant thunder, are heard from the wounded and the tens of thousands of the dying, leaving helpless families depending on their cares and sympathies for life; while a loud response is heard floating through the air from the ten thousand Indian children and orphans, who are left to mourn the honorable acts of a few – civilized men. (105)

Passages such as this one exemplify how Apess's deliberate shielding of information builds on the strategies of obfuscation in the Oration. Apess's penchant for passive constructions, for example, exploits the idea of a shared conception of so-called "illustrious men" to focus attention on seemingly benign terms and empire-building activities, which Pericles's Oration leaves unexplored. His rhetorical mode, characterized by a distinctive combination of drawn-out sentences, anaphora, and forms of stylized diction, serve to keep all these clearly not great words and deeds firmly in the forefront of the audience's mind.

Apess also updates the Oration by diverting his audience from seeing their common ground in terms of their "illustrious men" to instead seeing it in terms of Native people's "illustrious men". To convey integral cultural difference and the weight of an entire people's struggles and victories, Apess continues the lecture by coupling the indigenous-centred language of divine Nature with that of a mortal hero's powers of reason and improvement, as opposed to the Christian binary of sin and salvation alone. Apess follows the lesson displayed in the Oration that one cannot celebrate the glory of an individual hero and the potential of his people without first mourning the loss of fallen enemies. As he tells the brutal history of destructive Native – non-Native encounters, he refers to Sachems who precede Philip as "hosts" and "heroes", whereas colonists are "aggressors" and "enemies". A richly ironic seventeenth century history takes form in which Native peoples are the elect – the Christ-like – who try to save the sinful English when they arrive. Apess then introduces his main illustrious man, King Philip, a figure possessing a naturally divine capacity as well as the generic potential for self and social betterment. To indicate this mixture, Apess gives Philip diverse epithets. He is variously the "immortal Philip", "hero of the wilderness", and "son of the forest". Apess also points out his exceptional morality and love. Apess has Philip flirting with both the figure of the noble

savage and the son of God by giving him epithets that work like nimbus and garland, shadowing his grand manoeuvres, announcing his accolades. As such, Philip is, on more than one occasion, in the delivery of *Eulogy*, discernible as a superior to the most heralded of fallen Athenian warriors and Apress, his “descendant”, becomes more than a worthy rival for Pericles.

### 3 Sachems and Emperors

Arguing that *Eulogy* updates the Oration helps us gain further insight into the politics of a portion of the lecture that scholars have generally not considered: the racy portion of the speech in which Apress retells the history of the Wampanoag sachem, King Philip. In his account of King Philip, Apress emphasizes what he only suggests initially through a Homeric shorthand: Philip, and by association all Native people, actually underwrite and consistently best their Western contemporaries and predecessors because they, like their leader, were and remain true “men of the people” (134). Apress inserts the indigenous Philip in such a way into history that he undercuts the idea of Macedonian-style Western precursors Philip II and Alexander the Great and Pericles as models for the white leaders of a U.S. course of empire. Case in point: Philip, Apress declares,

outdid the well-disciplined forces of Greece under the command of Philip, the Grecian emperor; for he never was enabled to lay such plans of allying the tribes of the earth together, as Philip of Mount Hope did. And even Napoleon patterned after him, in collecting his forces and surprising the enemy. Washington, too, pursued many of his plans in attacking the enemy and thereby enabled him to defeat his antagonists and conquer them. (135–6)

Unlike Philip of Macedon, Apress explains, indigenous King or Sachem Philip revealed his greatness by unifying diverse peoples. As an upgrade to the Funeral Oration, Apress’s claim that the Wampanoag leader “outdid” his Greek namesake was both recognizable and bold, even bolder perhaps than stating that late-seventeenth-century indigenous peoples’ counter-colonial cause was as worthy and just as that of U.S. independence (105). Remarkably, Apress also tells an audience primed to privilege Philip II as well as Napoleon and Washington (who were famous for “patterning” themselves after Greek and Roman predecessors), that the modern Euro-Americans actually got their effective military ideas from Sachem Philip. Through this declaration, Apress’s version of the

indigenous Philip's era takes precedence as a transcendent moment, an epoch of horror and splendor that, unbeknownst to many, left its imprint on the new and old worlds. Sachem Philip and his era deserve to eclipse the echoing silence and the false glory that post-revolutionary and antebellum speakers attributed to subsequent wars. Apess's revisionary move, in which he places indigenous history in the context of the most frayed and yet recently reanimated corners of Western world history, underscores the oppositional traits that characterize a lineage of Native men: hospitality, sacrifice, devotion.

Apess returns to the explicit analogy with the ancients toward the lecture's end by floating the notion that Sachem Philip was *better* than his Macedonian namesake, King Philip II. Sachem Philip, he claims, "outdid the well-disciplined forces of Greece under the command of Philip, the Grecian emperor" (133). This claim appears within a comparative discussion of the material circumstances that shaped each man's victories:

But who was [King] Philip, that made all this display in the world, that put an enlightened nation to flight and won so many battles? It was a son of nature, with nature's talents alone. And who did he have to contend with? With all the combined arts of cultivated talents of the Old and New World. It was like putting one talent against a thousand. And yet Philip, with that, accomplished more than all of them. Yea, he outdid the well-disciplined forces of Greece under the command of Philip, the Grecian emperor[.] (133)

Apess explicitly heralds King Philip in relation to non-Native warriors whose methods and resources represent a cumulative development of "talents" across time – a global accumulation with ancient origins: as a "son of nature, with nature's talents alone", the Wampanoag sachem bested opponents who harnessed "all the combined arts of cultivated talents of the Old and New World[s]". Reinforcing the historical scope of his praise, Apess adds hyperbolically, "No warrior, of any age, was ever known to pursue such plans as Philip did" (134). The uniqueness of King Philip's strengths, in other words, must be understood in the context of an integrated, global indigenous *and* non-indigenous historical panorama.

This layered representation of Philip is apparent in a characteristically Romantic portion of *Eulogy*. As a means of convincing his audience of Sachem Philip's admirable role in the war that bears his name, Apess incorporates a poem without attribution or introduction, immediately prior to quoting an excerpt from a speech by Sachem Philip. The poem commemorates Philip's first council fire at which he allegedly brought together all the tribes to express

their grievances. The poem begins, "Now around the council fires they met, / The young nobles for to greet; / Their tales of woe and sorrows to relate, / About the Pilgrims, their wretched foes" (123). Thematically, this embedded portion of poem deals with growing indigenous resistance to English expansion at the start of the war. Formally, the poem's placement and lack of attribution create the effect that its sentiments do not belong to any one person, but rather lyrically voice the views of the tribes gathered to support Sachem Philip.

Apress follows this poem with a selection from Sachem Philip's famous speech to his "chiefs, counselors, and warriors", and a detailed critical commentary on the speech. Philip's words, allegedly delivered at the council fires, warn his "brothers" that they must "see this vast country before us" and recognize that their "ancient customs are disregarded" (123). He prophesies that the pilgrims "will cut down our groves, spoil our hunting and planting grounds, and drive us and our children from the graves of our fathers, and our council fires, and enslave our women and children" (123). What makes this excerpt so striking is not the speech itself, but rather, Apress's commentary on it:

The famous speech of Philip was calculated to arouse them to arms, to do the best they could in protecting and defending their rights. The blow had now been struck, the die was cast, and nothing but blood and carnage was before them. And we find Philip as active as the wind, as dexterous as a giant, firm as the pillows of heaven, and fierce as a lion, a powerful foe to contend with indeed, and as swift as an eagle, gathering together his forces to prepare them for battle. (123-4)

Romantic in lyrical and formally synthetic style, in this passage Apress slips from a plainspoken appraisal of Philip's pragmatism (his speech "was calculated to arouse them to arms, to do the best they could") into an allusive ("the die was cast") and simile-laden (he was "as active as the wind, as dexterous as a giant") verse. The initial passive constructions mute Philip's agency, and Apress highlights the design of the speech, rather than Philip's role in making it.

Like the content of Philip's speech, Apress's use of the idiomatic Latin phrase (*Alea iacta est*, "the die is cast"), uttered by Julius Caesar before he crossed the Rubicon, similarly highlights the extra-human forces that have already determined Philip's fate. The Wampanoag sachem appears to be finished before he has even begun to fight. Bathing the colonial war in a violent, Roman light helps foreshadow the betrayals of the indigenous and European people who ultimately plot to murder Philip. Apress's cliché emphasizes the fact that Philip did not aspire to bloody conquest, but rather, found himself forced to respond to a torrent of colonial violence predicated on the false mission of

“civilizing the world”. In this way, Apess borrows from Caesar in order to revise the “Western” value system that underpins the typical use of this iconic phrase. The train of similes that succeeds the allusion – “active as the wind, as dexterous as a giant, firm as the pillows of heaven, and fierce as a lion, ..., and as swift as an eagle” – reinforces the sense that Philip is not only Christ-like and akin to the fallen hero of a Roman tragedy; he is also god-like, the beleaguered but triumphant hero of a Homeric epic. First trapped by ineluctable, inhospitable forces, then moving beyond the reaches of those forces, Philip’s characterization recalls two of the classical world’s male heroes in that his tragic fall can be likened to Caesar’s military narrative, while his timeless actions in the face of aggressive forces could belong to Homer’s war and post-war epics. The combination of these classical connotations serves to insert the Wampanoag sachem, over and above Philip and Alexander, into a “Western” history. Making this substitution in a retelling of a colonial history conveys a warning to current citizens and non-citizens of the U.S.: the rise of “Athens” in America need not precede the fall of the new nation. There is a preferable, if abused and buried, alternative indigenous history to be told here, if only for the sake of an alternative, mutually beneficial, indigenous future.

Suffice it to say, in *Eulogy*, Apess’s revisionary moves demand rhetorical swerves from individual iconography to characterizations of warring peoples, the likes of which trade on ancient Greco-Roman texts and contexts. Revalorizing both Sachem Philip, his people, and their descendants, while also criticizing the actions and subsequent interpretations of English settler history necessitates the construction of a newly Romantic vision of Philip’s life for the sake of the “remaining few”, while challenging his audience’s glorification of settlement, which is currently being expressed in that same form and language. Apess accomplishes the challenge by first pointing out that the early English settlers survived thanks to the grace and hospitality of Native people. Aiming for more effective critique than this alone, though, he also counters any attempt to turn subsequent events in English settler history into sentimental, exceptional, war-laden odysseys, replete with disasters, which are survived by individual faith and wit alone. Apess, in short, de-mythicalizes initial English settlement. In his discussion of a later seventeenth-century surreptitious attack on the defensive Narragansett, for instance, Apess counters such a narrative based on relatively current world events: “It is believed that the sufferings of the Pilgrims were without a parallel in history; and it is supposed that the horrors and burning elements of Moscow will bear but a faint resemblance of that scene” (127). These commonly-held beliefs, and the comparison with the Fire in Moscow, which destroyed the city during the Napoleonic war,



are ludicrous means of describing the casualties of what was, in effect, very often an offensive, an act of unprovoked violence. Apress concludes by telling his audience of the settled (and long since deceased) Pilgrims in this attack: “no pity at all ought to be had for them” (127). Here, Apress makes one of his most scathing group attacks and vindications. Inverting opposing sides, as Drew Lopenzina puts it, he is “teas[ing] out a vision of Native civility from the jaundiced inscriptions of a corrupt people “calling themselves ‘Christians’” (231). What gives that “civility” the potential to untangle are the figures and forms associated with Hellenic revivalism in the antebellum U.S which Apress evokes and redeploys in *Eulogy*.

#### 4 Antiquity and Divinity in *Eulogy*

To argue that Apress deliberately “goes Greek” – naming pseudo-Hellenic colonizers and thematizing memorialization in ways that would not have been lost on his audiences who had the Funeral Oration in mind – is hardly to argue against prevailing early American and Native American studies readings of *Eulogy*. Rather, it is one way of introducing an important cultural overlay in the early nineteenth century, which enabled settlers to ignore and/or mischaracterize indigenous people, to usher them into the past for the sake of their own cultivated sense of modernity. Indigenous people had to expose this overlay if they wanted to change ingrained settler perspectives. Apress wanted to effect such change, though, his writings suggest that he recognized that it might, in fact, be impossible. His “hope”, as he put it, should propel us to think about how he confronted the Native – classical bind. We should imagine that Apress had in mind the reception and particulars of ancient Greek and Roman history and philosophy as well as specific north-eastern Native and Christian views and practices. The prospects of this constellation of influences comes to the fore when we look at Apress’s diction. He designates divinity in such terms as “God of nature” or “God of Heaven”. Both phrases likely convey a regional indigenous ontology.<sup>18</sup> They are, however, also phrases commonly used by early nineteenth-century Romantic writers in tandem to evoke Western

18 Relying on the loaded import of this phrase, Lisa T. Brooks argues that Apress introduces an indigenous-centred “God of Nature” (Apress’s term) based on ecological language that accommodates non-Christian *and* Christian divinities Apress, Brooks explains, does not aim to depict all Native people as Romantic noble savages destined to retire to the wilderness; rather, he describes a regional ontology based on which “the biblical God and the Indian’s god are one and the same, and the ‘noble’ work of this great Spirit can be seen in, and is enacted by, the inhabitants of earth” (200). Brooks explicitly elaborates on Maureen

antiquity's bearing on Old Testament narratives. Thinking in more structural terms, Apess's deliberate listing of colonial crimes puts what is missing from the Oration on the table even as it also enacts the cleansing Haudenosaunee or Iroquois practices that Drew Lopenzina ascribes to the *Eulogy*. The mere prospect of a classical resonance here, however, also adds to Apess's move of debunking the idea that the touted values associated with the idea of a civilized West – promises of its primordial cultural and military strength – were far from endemic to a people who merely claimed to be a part of that lineage. Then as now, these same values could be found in Native and settler communities. Evoking such a resonance was a risky move for Apess to make since the idea of an original, influential "Native civility" was already code among white listeners and readers for what ineluctably *was* rather than being a descriptor of what *is*, much less what *could be*.

In its parting paragraphs, Apess tackles this risk by transporting his audience and his people from the colonial past to the recent national past. Upon this return, the word "ancient", which Apess uses multiple times to refer to the indigenous land rights and customs that predate English settler land rights, becomes tied principally to English settlement history. In a summary gesture, Apess reminds his listeners of the value of looking to "ancient times" with a comparative eye: "Having now given historical facts, and an exposition in relation to ancient times, by which we have been enabled to discover the foundation which destroyed our common fathers in their struggle together"; this foundation, he declares, "was indeed nothing more than the spirit of avarice and usurpation of power that has brought people in all ages to hate and devour each other" (136). Now concerned with the aftershocks of the first wave of Anglo settlement ending with King Philip's War, Apess offers a final, brutal historical illustration of settler violence against Christian Natives in 1750. He describes how "a party of two hundred white warriors massacred" a settlement of "Christian Indians" on the banks of the Ohio. Apess describes the killing by these "white savages" and scoffs at the suggestion that indigenous people today are deemed "savage" for "complaining" about similar injustices (137). Apess's use of "warriors" and "savagery" for these white men masks the bitterness in his indictment of a relatively recent massacre. The irony highlights the differences between actual and imagined identities. Rather than just making an *ad hominem* attack, Apess suggests, through this diction, that being a warrior, a savage, and a Christian is a matter of perspective. Such language can have deadly consequences, particularly if one uses these terms to assert that the warrior

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Konkle, *Writing Indian Nations: Native Intellectuals and the Politics of Historiography*, 1827–1863. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

and the Christian, or the savage and the civilized, have fundamentally different needs. As an indigenous person himself, constrained by U.S. laws and subject to removal and even death on a whim, he makes this cogent point by posing and answering a question, which he perceives his audience, white missionaries in particular, want to know: "What do they, the Indians, want?" His answer is "they want what you want": not to be brutalized, dehumanized, or ignored, but rather, to be treated equally "in order to make men of them, good and wholesome citizens.... not only to make Christians of us, but men which plan as yet has never been pursued" (138).

Apress's final words stage a potential route to reconciliation between indigenous and non-Native New Englanders, but they do so while performing a reversal of nearly every classically-anchored rhetorical position employed in the speech. His sequence of reversals strikes a dissonant chord, given its immediate contrast to the anecdotes of settler brutality he has just shared. He seems to pivot:

Having now closed, I would say that many thanks is due from me to you, though an unworthy speaker, for your kind attention; and I wish you to understand that we are thankful for every favor; and you and I have to rejoice that we have not to answer for our father's crimes; neither shall we do right to charge them one to another. We can only regret it, and flee from it; and from henceforth, let peace and righteousness be written upon our hearts and hands forever, is the wish of a poor Indian. (138)

Apress reverts from a scathing counter-colonial exposé and a primarily, hagiographic portrait of Sachem Philip – using allusions and rhetorical moves that indicate that he is far from an "unworthy speaker" – to a masculinist citizenship appeal, deferential gratitude, a dismissal of the effects of historical violence, and a personal hope for a clean slate. Such lines seem to contradict Apress's illustrated command of rhetoric and his view of the deep-seated effect of New England settler colonialism in the present – an effect perhaps best exemplified by his remarkable claim, "the doctrine of the Pilgrims has grown up with the people" (133).

Neither the sign of a literal forced hand nor a naïve gesture, the parting words of *Eulogy* show Apress modelling the same modesty, hospitality, and unifying capacity he attributes to Philip and to indigenous people whom he has shown to have consistently served as model precedents (not unlike the ancient Greeks) for their settler counterparts. The effect of such modelling is to underscore a possible, non-Athenian, indigenous correction in the U.S. course of empire. What he has in mind is additional planning, which Apress

proposes that white evangelicals tack on to their conversion labors among the Indians – citizenship training, or what Apess refers to singularly, in civic terms as preparation for “work”, which must “begin here first in New England”. This planning aligns with his representation of systemic, local settler prejudice. As a much-needed supplement to Christianity, it too evokes traces of a Hellenic platform. The assertion that he and his audience might “flee” from their “father’s crimes” is also in keeping with prevailing forms of Romantic Hellenism, which subtend Apess’s lecture and shaped its reception. In fact, the tension between the idea that the spreading of faith alone cannot bring about justice at home and the idea that local ordeals could translate into something divine characterizes much early American literature, a too often forgotten sign of the classical culture on which that literature rests. Privileging indigenous people, Apess offers us a similar, typical tension in his conclusion.

Apess’s meta-critical tendency – his penchant for talking about what his subject is and is not – together with his less-discussed potential paradoxes are signs that he is working through a representational problem: how does an indigenous man, minister, and ardent anti-colonialist commemorate a once powerful Sachem known as King Philip when a classically-inflected form and Romantic language designed to commemorate non-Native male military leaders had been and continued to be used to inscribe national white progress and describe white unity, respectively? But classicism in the speech, and in the context for the speech, remind us that Apess’s allusions and intertexts and his ironic boldness and deference evoke ancient Greco-Roman heroes, manipulating that ancient Western world for effect, and positing indigenous global primacy, dignity, and vitality in their place. Reading *Eulogy* in this light one comes to appreciate the bind Apess worked to overcome in his last known piece of published writing: laboring to bring about a more promising future for indigenous people, he could well have simply established another means of seeing them as even more completely of the past.

## 5 Apess, Native American Studies, and the Classics

For Apess and his audience, Hellenic displays in military and educational early antebellum texts and contexts routinely foregrounded the ancient leaders and the Periclean literary form, which I have identified as significant touchstones for the lecture. Imagine the liberal, great men histories of the Greeks available in print in the early U.S., progressive speeches and fictions made in the image of Pericles, and neoclassical buildings, such as the Odeon where Apess delivered

his work. A principal subject of Apress's speech – settler colonization – was tied to these displays. Building up a national Hellenic archive, local affect for a polity, a city in the image of golden-age Athens all helped, more or less directly, dilute or temper settler responses to their continued project of displacing and replacing indigenous people insofar as they deflected attention away from the roots of that project. Apress's lecture was meant to work against such deflection and, of course, to preclude the typical settler bowdlerizing of American colonial and (post) colonial U.S. history. One of its author's strategies for this difficult counter-colonial truth-telling was to engage the figures and forms from antiquity that promised to end indigenous futures. Apress questioned the notion that the U.S. was becoming a democratic Athens, indicating instead that it was operating historically like an imperial Greece, a Greece that by virtue of its expansionist ambitions symbolized the cyclical nature of a republic, its rise and fall. In making bold, near-rehearsals of Hellenic forms in his speech, Apress was at risk of becoming mystical antiquarian fodder for other people's betterment, their education. As an individual representing his people rather than being represented by Euro-Americans, speaking rather than being spoken about, he tried to turn the implications of such "pasting" on its head while working from within tangled rhetorical and aesthetic relations. Describing colonial crimes and the intimate relationship between nature and Native people, with their "purer virtues" and their "talents" evident in "equal luster", he could un-braid ingrained settler discourses that justified and filtered those crimes. But, in asserting colonial crimes and promoting exemplary Native people in Greek garb and form he had the potential to cloak crimes and reinforce the stereotypes he sought to complicate. Apress's limited acclaim, ultimately truncated tour, and the history of Removal suggest that Apress unfortunately had this latter effect and that his activist labor fell on deaf ears. But we would be remiss, then as now, not to imagine that his work struck a chord with audience members who had a thorough and abiding understanding of Greek history and culture: listeners who could feel for the ancients and for themselves without giving up on their sharp critique of either. Such men and women were at least potential converts to Apress's cause.

Hellenism, we should remember, offers us one more revealing way of rethinking the impact not just of the writings of Apress, but also the political and aesthetic force of Native American literary history too. Case in point: to believe in the classical currents behind this now-canonical Apress speech alone we must admit that a version of the Greeks offered Apress's audience a stirring lens for interpreting Native people, a platform for reinforcing settler privileges, but also, if called out, questioning them. Despite the considerable body of

cultural studies scholarship on indigenous-settler relations, this belief about classicism is rarely a presupposition in current critical analyses. Scholars studying the representation of indigenous people have explored how Greco-Roman epics were instrumental for settlers as they sought to make sense of what was, to them, a new world. Scholars studying early Native American literature and culture have productively directed recent attention toward the importance of prevalent indigenous philosophies as well as Christian missionary and juridical discourse. Neither of these groups of scholars, however, has been sufficiently concerned with how modern indigenous people, who were representing themselves and also their people, confronted neo-classicism. Current intellectual histories of post-revolutionary and antebellum U.S. classical reception have begun to bridge this divide. When one reads classical reception histories of the same period and region as Native American cultural histories, though, one is still often struck by the unfortunate sense that these monographs describe different worlds entirely. Overlaps between these worlds, such as we find in a study of Apess's *Eulogy on King Philip*, suggest, though, that there are likely other illuminating, overlooked stories about early modern indigenous writers and the classics to be told.

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## Beavers as the Bees of New France: The Beaver's 'Allegorical Turn' in Father François Du Creux's *Historia Canadensis*

William M. Barton and Jean-Nicolas Mailloux

The beaver is among modern Canada's best recognized symbols: alongside its official designation as the country's national animal in 1975, the beaver also currently appears on the Canadian five-cent piece, as well as on the modern Canadian parliament building's Peace Tower in the figure of the 'mother beaver'.<sup>1</sup> This symbolism is nothing new: the animal's significance for the region's economic and social history was similarly referenced in early modern culture, and the beaver was proposed for appearance on both the Hudson's Bay Company's coat of arms and that of Quebec City already in 1678, to take just two well-known examples. This early symbolic interest in the beaver was accompanied by vivid literary attention, where more objective descriptions of the animal's physical features, lifestyle, dams, and lodges – as well as, of course, how best to hunt it – appeared beside more creative treatments of its apparent communal activity. By the end of the eighteenth century, the beaver was regularly raised to the position of an idealized model for human social structure, collective industry, and just behavior in writings about colonial societies all over the American continent.

With such a prominent position in both historical and modern Canadian culture, it comes as no surprise to find that the beaver, along with its social, economic, and symbolic functions, has been well studied.<sup>2</sup> For the particular

1 From the vast quantity of literature on the beaver as a symbol of modern Canada we mention here but the most recent, and the description of the Canadian government: Colin M. Coates, "The Beaver", in *Symbols of Canada*, ed. D.A. Wright, M. Dawson, and C. Gidney (Toronto, ON: Between the Lines, 2018): Chp. 1; Canada.ca "Patrimoine canadien", *Symboles officiels du Canada*, December 14, 2017, <https://www.canada.ca/fr/patrimoine-canadien/services/symboles-officiels-canada.html>.

2 For a concise overview introducing biological, historical, and cultural issues in the Canadian context see Rudy Boonstra, "Beaver", *The Canadian Encyclopedia. Historica Canada*, July 11, 2013 (last modified February 01, 2016): <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/beaver>. The standard reference in the history of the beaver and the fur trade remains Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2017). The latest 2017 edition is a reprint of the



purposes of this chapter, scholars have dedicated a good deal of attention to the popular use of the animal as an allegory and point of comparison for human society in early modern literature, with a special focus on texts from the late seventeenth century onwards.<sup>3</sup> The expression which this theme found in Louis-Armand de Lom d'Arce, Baron de Lahontan's 'beaver republic', along with his striking engraving of the animal in the *Mémoires de l'Amérique Septentrionale* (Paris 1705),<sup>4</sup> is one example that rose to particular prominence among contemporaries, and is still well-known today.

If the implications and significance of this anthropomorphic discourse surrounding the figure of the beaver in the New World are already relatively well understood, then, its origins have nonetheless remained somewhat murky. As we shall see, the beaver was already an animal frequently treated in classical literature, and ideas connected to the popular medical product *castoreum*, extracted from the animal's perianal glands, were certainly in wide circulation even before the first French settlement attempts in *la Nouvelle France*. But the inspiration, motivation, and author responsible for this turn from existing literary *topoi* long associated with the beaver, to the allegorical, anthropomorphic discourses so popular from the mid-seventeenth century are yet to be identified.

The present contribution aims to redress and rectify this gap in our understanding. After first surveying writings about the beaver in (1) ancient and early modern European literature and (2) the earliest writing about New France so as to provide background for the turn towards allegorical accounts later described, we pinpoint the emergence of the allegorical literary treatment of the beaver (3) in the *Historia Canadensis* (1664) of Father François

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revised 1970 edition with the new introductory essay of 1999. For a chapter-length introduction to the Early Modern literary function of the beaver upon which the present article expands see Gordon M. Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains: Representations of Native Americans in French and English Colonial Literature* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997): 218–247.

3 François-Marc Gagnon, *Images du castor canadien, XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Sillery, QC: Les éditions du Septentrion, 1994); François-Marc Gagnon, "La première iconographie du castor", *Scientia canadensis: Revue canadienne d'histoire des sciences, des techniques et de la médecine* 31, no. 1–2 (2008): 13–26; Margot Francis, "The Strange Career of the Canadian Beaver: Anthropomorphic Discourses and Imperial History", *Journal of Historical Sociology* 17, no. 2–3 (2004): 209–239; Arnold L. Kerson, "The Republic of Beavers: An American Utopia", *Utopian Studies* 11, no. 2 (2000): 14–32; Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains*, 218–247.

4 For Lahontan and the 'beaver republic' see here section 4 below. See also the detailed treatment in Gagnon, *Images du castor canadien*, 89–97.

Du Creux S.J. (1596–1666).<sup>5</sup> Unsurprisingly in the context of the Jesuit Order's profound engagement with classical literature and ideas, we locate the literary inspiration for Du Creux's depiction of beavers as an ideal for society primarily in Virgil's well-known passage on the bees from the fourth book of the *Georgics* (G. 4.149–250). While Du Creux never made his model explicit, later authors quickly picked up on his ancient allusions and expanded enthusiastically on the theme. Having identified Du Creux's passages as the foundation for the well-studied explosion of anthropomorphic discourse on the beaver that followed him, we then revisit (4) numerous more celebrated responses to Du Creux's little known Latin history from authors writing across the American continent. Revealing the origins of the allegorical turn in writing about the beaver thus sheds new light on the remodelling and development the idea underwent in later literature. The conclusion thus brings together the present contribution's results for three overlapping fields of study: i) the implications of identifying the origin of the beaver's allegorical symbolism in Du Creux for our study of later authors' use of the *topos*; ii) the value of a literary reading of Du Creux's *Historia* for our understanding of his work and others like it; iii) the significance of Du Creux's allegorical shift for contemporary knowledge about the New World: his work's influence both prospective and realized.

## 1 The Beaver in Ancient and Early Modern Literature

Unlike the ant and most famously the bee, the beaver did not figure among the animals frequently mobilized in European literature for comparison with social structure. The beaver nonetheless featured prominently in earlier descriptions of the natural world. Indeed, the authors who dealt with the animal had already begun to emphasize a number of features based on its biology and lifestyle that would characterize ideas about the animal before the influential description in the *Historia Canadensis*. The following survey cannot, of course, offer an exhaustive summary of ideas about the beaver in pre-seventeenth century European literature. It intends, rather, by means of a

5 François Du Creux (Franciscus Creuxius) (SJ) *Historiae canadensis seu Novae Franciae libri decem, ad annum usque MDCLVI* (Paris: Sébastien Cramoisy and Sébastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1664). For more information about Du Creux's work, see also Colette Demaizière, "Comment, sous Louis XIV, voyait-on la Nouvelle-France? in *Historia Canadensis* du jésuite François Du Creux (1664)", *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Hafniensis*, Proceedings of the Eighth International Congress of Neo-Latin Studies, (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991): 355–364; Amélie Hamel, "Les *Historiae Canadensis* (1664) du père François Du Creux: enjeu et problèmes littéraires", *Tangence*, no. 92 (2010): 67–82.

few select examples to illustrate some key ideas about the *fiber* (“beaver”) circulating before Du Creux in order to sketch possible sources of inspiration for his allegorical ‘turn’, as well as the ideas he chose to sideline in his innovative account.

The earliest mention of the beaver in fifth BCE Greek historian Herodotus already contains two ideas that would gain a good deal of significance in the later tradition:<sup>6</sup> in his description of Scythian tribes, he depicts the wooded lakeland territory of one group, where the otter, the beaver (κάστωρ [kástor]), and other similar animals are obviously at home. Of these animals, he writes, τὰ δέρματα παρὰ τὰς σισύρνας παραρράπτεται, καὶ οἱ ὄρχιες αὐτοῖσι εἰσι χρήσιμοι ἐς ὑστερέων ἄχεσιν (4.109), (“the skins are used as trimming for fur coats, and their testicles are put to use by these people as medicine for the womb”). The already widespread use of beaver skins for clothing reached a peak in the early history of North America when European settlers discovered the prevalence of their own threatened Eurasian beaver’s American cousin.<sup>7</sup> While the economic and political implications of this use of the animal were enormous, literary ideas about the beaver continued to engage more intensively with the medical product *castoreum* – a substance already canonized in poetry by Virgil (*virosa ... castorea*: “powerful beaver secretions”, G. 1.58–59).

Extracted not – as Herodotus, like all other ancient authors, believed – from the beaver’s testicles, *castoreum* is in fact a product of the animal’s specialized perianal sacs, which it uses primarily to mark its territory. The use of this strongly scented fluid for various medical ends in the ancient world led to the creation of a widespread legend, already circulating by the time of Pliny’s (23 CE–79 CE) treatment of the beaver. After describing older asses’ jealous castration of younger males in the previous chapter of his natural history, he writes, *easdem partes sibi ipsi Pontici amputant fibri periculo urgente, ob hoc se peti gnari; castoreum id vocant medici*: (“the beavers of the Euxine, when faced with pressing danger, remove those same parts [their testicles] themselves, as if they knew this is what is wanted of them; doctors call this product *castoreum*”)

6 For the first mention of the beaver in classical literature in Herodotus see Kenneth F. Kitchell, *Animals in the Ancient World from A to Z* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014). Kitchell’s entry on the beaver provides an extremely useful introduction to ancient ideas about the animal. Equally profitable reading for its typically encyclopedic summary of ancient and medieval knowledge about the beaver, and its influential illustration of the animal, is the long entry in Conrad Gessner’s *Historia animalium* (Froschauer: Zurich, 1551–58 and 1587): 309–17 (illustration p. 309).

7 On the collapse of beaver populations in Europe see Clive Ponting, *A New Green History Of The World: The Environment and the Collapse of Great Civilizations* (London: Random House, 2011): 139, 156–157.

(Plin. *NH* 8.47). This image of the beaver's self-castration was popular in the ancient imagination,<sup>8</sup> and later authors profited from the very fertile idea in their reflections on the animal's character and behavior. Among the most comprehensive of these was the account of later author Aelian (c. 175 CE–c. 235 CE), whom it is worth citing at length:

Οὐκοῦν ἐπίσταται τὴν αἰτίαν δι' ἣν ἐπ' αὐτὸν οἱ θηραταὶ σὺν προθυμίᾳ τε καὶ ὀρμῇ τῇ πάσῃ χωροῦσι, καὶ ἐπικύψας καὶ δακῶν ἀπέκοψε τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ ὄρχεις, καὶ προσέριπεν αὐτοῖς, ὡς ἀνὴρ φρόνιμος λησταῖς μὲν περιπεσὼν, καταθεῖς δὲ ὅσα ἐπῆγετο ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σωτηρίας, λύτρα δῆπου ταῦτα ἀλλαττόμενος ... Πολλάκις δὲ καὶ ἔνορχοι ὄντες, ὡς ὅτι πορρωτάτῳ ἀποσπάσαντες τῷ δρόμῳ, εἴτα ὑποστείλαντες τὸ σπουδαζόμενον μέρος, πάνυ σοφῶς καὶ πανούργως ἐξηπάτησαν, ὡς οὐκ ἔχοντες ἃ κρύψαντες εἶχον.<sup>9</sup>

[Now, it knows the reason that hunters go after it so eagerly and quickly, and it thus lowers its head and cuts off its own testicles with its teeth, throwing them to the hunters just like a prudent man who, having fallen into the hands of thieves, hands over what he has with him for his own salvation, giving away these things, naturally, as the price of release ... But often those still with their testicles, when they have got as far away as possible, now tuck away their much-coveted parts, and thus having very cleverly and ingeniously deceived [the hunters], they then act like they no longer have what they are in fact hiding.]<sup>10</sup>

The two notions associated here with the beaver's fabled self-castration – the animal's self-sacrifice to ensure his safety and his apparent ability to understand what the hunters are after (also alluded to in the passage from Pliny, above) – went on to see further development in European writing about the natural world.

To take the more straightforward of these ideas first, the clever (φρόνιμος) beaver's prudence and ingenuity likely contributed to later appreciation of the skill involved in the construction of their lodges, along with – an important

8 Cf., e.g., Cic. *Scaur.* F13. We have followed the text as used in Andrew R. Dyck, *Marcus Tullius Cicero: Speeches on Behalf of Marcus Fonteius and Marcus Aemilius Scaurus: Translated with Introduction and Commentary*, Clarendon Ancient History Series (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Dyck's text is in turn based on the 1907 Oxford edition by Clark. For a poetic use of the topic see the metaphor in Sil. *Pun.* 15. 485–7.

9 Ael. *NA*, 6.34.

10 Translations of material cited are the authors' own throughout, except where otherwise stated.

idea for our purposes – the perceived organization of the communities that built them. These ideas were brought together in Olaus Magnus's (1490–1557) 1555 *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* – an early modern bestseller on Sweden – which dedicated two chapters specifically to the beaver.<sup>11</sup> Here, alongside notes on the animal's preferred habitats, its fur, and the preparation of its tail as food, Magnus describes the beaver's homes, *quas et mira fabricant arte* ("which they construct with wonderful skill"), as well as their ability to build *gregatim* ("in groups"), so well organized that weaker individuals are singled out for use as barrows for transporting logs homewards.<sup>12</sup>

While some authors, then, took up the idea of the beaver's intelligence and ingenuity, others chose to develop the associated theme of self-sacrifice. Christian authors in particular saw considerable promise here and the topic already features in the *Physiologus*, the early didactic compilation from Alexandria (composed ca. 2nd CE). In the work's chapter on the beaver, we find the self-castration story repeated before the didactic voice of the work's author instructs the Christian reader, ἀπόδος τὰ τοῦ κυνηγοῦ αὐτῷ. Ὁ κυνηγός ἐστιν ὁ διάβολος, τὰ δὲ αὐτοῦ εἰσι πορνεία, μοιχεία, φόνος. Ἐκκοψον τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ δὸς τῷ διαβόλῳ ("give the hunter what belongs to him. The hunter is the devil, and what belongs to him is whoring, marital affairs, murder. Tear everything like this out and hand it to the devil"). Just as the idea of the beaver's ingenuity in Olaus Magnus's well-known text on Sweden and its history, the animal's (now-christianized) self-sacrifice also became a very popular theme in European literature. Representative of the theme's success in writers before Du Creux is its appearance in Andrea Alciato's (1492–1550) enormously influential emblem book first published in 1531. Here the beaver is pictured removing its own testicles whilst fleeing from the hunter and his hounds. The following Latin poem acknowledges the beaver's ingenuity and skill, as well as the reputed medicinal properties of its private parts, before finishing with a moral example of the animal we have met in the *Physiologus*:

11 Olaus Magnus, *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Rome: Giovanni Maria Viotto, 1555): 8.5–6. After its initial publication in Latin the work grew to immense popularity and was translated into Italian (1565), German (1567), English (1658) and Dutch (1665). Abridgments of the work appeared also at Antwerp (1558 and 1562), Paris (1561), Amsterdam (1586), Frankfurt (1618) and Leiden (1652).

12 For the early appearance of this idea in the *De natura rerum* of late medieval Augustinian monk Thomas of Cantimpré (1201–1263), as recorded in Vincent of Beauvais's (1184–1264) encyclopedic compilatory work the *Speculum naturale* see Gagnon, *Images du castor canadien*, 42 (n. 10).

Huius ab exemplo disce non parcere rebus,  
Et, vitam ut redimas, hostibus aera dare.<sup>13</sup>

[By his example, learn not to be thrifty with your possessions,  
But to give money to your enemies, in order to save your life.]

## 2 The *Castor Canadensis* in New French Literature before Du Creux

Against this literary background highlighting the commodities provided by the beaver (its fur and the *castoreum*) together with its perceived intelligence and shrewd behavior (as seen in praises of its building skills and fabled self-castration), colonists and authors connected to North America set up a new descriptive canvas during their sustained acquaintance with the New World's natural environment, in order to depict the animal in terms corresponding more closely with their experiences and expectations. Drawing on the earlier tradition outlined above, they produced vivid descriptions of the beaver motivated on the one hand by the fact that the animal would soon become the country's main asset and, on the other, by the evidence of the animal's communal work and habits, comparable to those of human societies. Eager to see the development of permanent settlements in New France, however, these early writers on North America now took these ideas a step further and would use beavers as examples of ideal colonists praised for their continence, foresight, and steadfastness.

Marc Lescarbot (c. 1570–1641) – the ‘French Hakluyt’<sup>14</sup> – thus reports on the beaver's monogamy in an oblique way, suggesting that his readers could already expect this sort of behavior from the animal. Describing the materials which compose its lodge akin to those used by Europeans for their houses, he insists first and foremost on its bed among its household labors: *Il fait premièrement son lit avec de la paille ou autre chose propre à coucher, tant pour lui que pour sa femelle* (“he first makes his couch with straw or other things fit to lie upon, as well for him as for his female”).<sup>15</sup> The use of the possessive article here points

13 Andrea Alciato, *Emblematum liber* (Augsburg: Heinrich Steyner, 1531): no. 153, E3<sup>r</sup>.

14 For the moniker, see Henry P. Biggar, “The French Hakluyt: Marc Lescarbot of Vervins”, *The American Historical Review* 6, no. 4 (1901): 671–692. For a recent monograph-length treatment of this important figure see Thomas Pfeiffer, *Marc Lescarbot: pionnier de la Nouvelle-France* (Paris: Editions L'Harmattan, 2012).

15 We have used here the first edition of the *Histoire*: Marc Lescarbot, *Histoire de la Nouvelle France* (Paris: Jean Millot, 1609): here 815. For the English translation, we have followed William L. Grant, *Lescarbot: History of New France*, (Toronto, ON: The Champlain Society,

subtly to the beaver's monogamic habits, which Du Creux and later authors would retain. Lescarbot is also interested in their architectural prowess upon which he comments with vocabulary reminiscent of man-made constructions: his passages centre on the beaver's works of solid wood and skilled masonry; the "vaults", "pyramids" and "mansions" they build.<sup>16</sup> This also proves true in Lescarbot's poetic works collected in the *Muses de la Nouvelle-France*, which share this emphasis on the bed as the centre of a homestead and the beaver's magnificent constructions:

L'industriel castor (qui sa maison batit  
 Sur la rive d'un lac, où il dresse son lict  
 Vouté d'une façon aux hommes incroyable,  
 Et plus que noz palais mille fois admirable,  
 Y laissant vers le lac un conduit seulement  
 Pour s'aller égayer souz l'humide element).<sup>17</sup>

137–142

[The industrious beaver (that builds its home  
 On the lakeshore, where it fashions its bed  
 Vaulted in a way incredible to men,  
 And a thousand times more admirable than our palaces,  
 Leaving only one chink towards the lake  
 To cavort in the watery element).]<sup>18</sup>

Turning more directly to Virgilian commonplaces, Lescarbot boasted not of the beaver but of the *niridau* – the hummingbird – as an illustration of what might figure as the bee of New France. In the *Adieu à la Nouvelle-France*, a

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1914): here vol. III, 223. Authors' additions or changes to Grant's translations are marked in square brackets.

16 Grant, *Lescarbot: History of New France*, 223. Note that Grant translates rather plainly the original 'manoir' with "house".

17 Lescarbot published his *Muses de la Nouvelle-France* in 1609 as a separate title but bound in the same volume as his *Histoire*. For the text here we follow the critical edition of Marie-Christine Pioffet and Isabelle Lachance, (eds.), *Marc Lescarbot. Poésies et opuscules sur la Nouvelle-France* (Montréal, QC: Nota Bene, 2014). The *A-Dieu à La Nouvelle-France* appears pp. 99–120.

18 We have followed the English translation of Haijo Westra, "Farewell to Canada: Marc Lescarbot's *A-Dieu à La Nouvelle-France* (1607). Essay & Translation", *Numéro Cinq*, December 11, 2015, <http://numerocinqmagazine.com/2015/12/11/farewell-to-canada-marc-lescarbotts-a-dieu-a-la-nouvelle-france1607-essay-translation-haijo-westra/>. As Westra took the original 1609 edition of the poem as the base for his text, so have we.

didactic epyllion<sup>19</sup> influenced by Du Bartas's creation narrative in *La Sepmaine* (1578), Lescarbot dedicates himself especially to the poetic description of animals unknown to his forbear. In another register, that of the bee as a metaphor for poetic work, the hummingbird becomes the symbol of elusive inspiration evading New France's pioneering poet:

Admirable oiselet, pourquoi donc, envieux,  
T'es-tu cent-fois rendu invisible à mes yeux,  
Lors que legerement me passant à l'aureille  
Tu laissois seulement d'un doux bruit la merveille?  
Je n'eusse esté cruel à ta rare beauté,  
Comme d'autres qui t'ont mortellement traité,  
Si tu eusses à moy daigné te rendre.

[...]

*Niridau* oiselet delicat de nature,  
Qui de l'abeille prent la tendre nourriture  
Pillant de noz jardins les odorantes fleurs,  
Et des rives des bois les plus rares douceurs.

213–230

[Amazing little bird, why then, [as if] envious,  
Have you made yourself invisible to my eyes a hundred times  
While passing lightly by my ears  
You left only the marvel of a soft sound?  
I would not have been cruel to your rare beauty  
[Un]like others who have treated you fatally  
If you had deemed me worthy to come and portray you.  
[...]

*Niridau*, delicate little bird by nature,  
That takes the sweet nourishment of bees  
Syphoning the fragrant flowers of our gardens,  
And the rarest sweets from the forest edge.]

Lescarbot's lines powerfully illustrate the challenge facing early authors attempting to treat the New World in their writing, among them Du Creux: to

19 For the interpretation of Lescarbot's *Adieu* within the georgic tradition see William M. Barton, "The *Georgics* off the Canadian Coast: Marc Lescarbot's *A-dieu à la Nouvelle-France* (1609) and the Virgilian Tradition", in: Freer, N. and Xinyue, B. (eds.) *Reflections and New Perspectives on Virgil's Georgics*. (London: Bloomsbury, 2019): 155–163.



match classical sources with New World *realia* in order to make them fit into his contemporary European “grid of intelligibility” (as Zachary Yuzwa illustrates further in this volume). Like the hummingbird, Lescarbot and others too must draw simultaneously from the “fragrant flowers of his [own] gardens”, that is to say what they harness from the classical tradition, and those “rarest sweets” from faraway forests.

The authors of the *Relations des Jésuites de la Nouvelle-France* – the Jesuits’ annual chronicles of their mission produced between 1632 and 1673 – obviously pay less attention to the literary aspects of their works. They thus attach less importance to the hummingbird, whose metaphorical value did not appeal to them as it did to Lescarbot. The priests were primarily concerned with discovering new territory, extending Christendom, and establishing new settlements. The Recollect friar Gabriel Sagard (1614–1636) and the Jesuit Paul Le Jeune (1591–1664) devote significant attention to beavers, later echoed and reformulated by Du Creux in line with his own historiographical motives. Both authors, for example, underlined the beaver’s fertility, producing five to six offspring each year. Their reasons for doing so were twofold: beavers could serve as prime targets for extensive hunting, and even, in a second phase, domestication.<sup>20</sup> The animal’s famed foresight, once based on its fabled self-emasculation, also acquires new value here: beavers sensibly stock wood in their lodges for the winter to come; they cleverly build complex housing that ensures them access to water beneath the ice; and these lodges are solid enough to resist musket fire. On a more suggestive level Sagard also picks up on the idea recorded in Olaus Magnus that a disgraced beaver might be used as a stretcher by others, when he points to their good organization.<sup>21</sup> Again on the theme of the beaver’s apparent intelligence, Le Jeune refers in the 1636 *Relation of New France* to the natives’ interpretation of the beaver’s stoic attitude in the face of capture:

Je leur demandois pourquoy le castor attendoit là qu’on le tuast: où ira il? me disoient ils, sa maison est rompue, les autres endroits où il peut respirer entre l’eau et la glace sont cassez, il demeure là dans l’eau, cherchant de l’air; cependant on l’assomme.

20 See also Le Jeune, Reuben G. Thwaites (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*. (Cleveland, OH: Burrow Brothers, 1896–1901): vol. VI, 164–165.

21 Gabriel Sagard [M. Wrong (transl.)], *The Long Journey to the Country of the Hurons*, Toronto, Champlain Society, 1939, 233.

[I asked them why the beaver waited there until it was killed. "Where will it go?" they said to me; "its house is broken to pieces and the other places where it could breathe between the water and ice are broken; it remains there in the water, seeking air, and meanwhile it is killed".]<sup>22</sup>

This *mise-en-scène* of fearless beavers surrounded by natives armed with clubs – not unlike the dreaded *casse-tête* bludgeon they used against their enemies – thus makes for an amplified, New World version of the brave beaver we met already in Aelian. Lescarbot's early if unsuccessful poetic search for an animal in the New World that might play the role of the bee in his Canadian *Georgics*, together with the later, more practical descriptions of the beaver – themselves heavily influenced by early ideas about the animal in European literature – in the chronicles of Sagard and Le Jeune, thus set the background for the allegorical turn now taken in Du Creux's *Historia*.

### 3 Du Creux and the Allegorical "Turn"

Confronted with the question of New France's appeal – which, contrary to expectation, looked nothing like the 'old' France – Marc Lescarbot in his work of 1609 had praised not only the *niridau* but also the region's grapevines. Himself a witness to their preternatural fertility, he notes that these extraordinarily abundant vines brought the promise of a wine to match that of the old country; they simply awaited domestication and the attentive care of the colonists. The example of the grapevines served as a symbol of the returns expected from the settlement enterprise. Just as the soil and climate would be tempered once cleared of the bristled forests throughout the country, its fields would soon be covered with vines and would reveal themselves to be on a par with the landscapes of Gascogne in France. After all, the new country was on the same latitude as Bordeaux and its province.

Half a century later, however, these promises seemed futile, especially since colonization efforts had drifted further north. Arguments praising the quality of the area's natural resources were nevertheless widespread in contemporary literature about the region, which, it must be admitted, remain somewhat testing even by modern agricultural standards. Father François Du Creux's *Historia Canadensis* – a summary of the history of New France drawing mainly from Jesuit sources – would have recourse to an argument rooted in the vivid tales developed in his day around the beaver. While in Du Creux the animal is

22 Le Jeune, R.G. Thwaites (ed.), *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 302.

described in a historiographical mode, it nonetheless recalls numerous aspects of the image of the bees in the fourth book of Virgil's *Georgics*.

The bee in Virgil, as in other ancient authors,<sup>23</sup> had notably been evoked not only as an allegory of the poet and his labors but also of a monarchical society, or even a perfectly balanced and virtuous type of communal living.<sup>24</sup> Here we will focus on beavers as compared with bees in relation to the ways in which they have been used as models for civilization. In the case of Du Creux's *Historia Canadensis*, the reference to the Virgilian *topos* is far from trivial: his treatment of the beaver serves, we argue, a similar purpose to that of his ancient model, yet more firmly adapted to the issues of his contemporary culture and capable of justifying and shaping his Order's missionary work in New France.

The first book of the work includes a preliminary historical account of the situation in Quebec City in 1625, when Jesuit missionaries took over evangelization in New France,<sup>25</sup> and the difficulties encountered in the city, which at that time was little more than the 'habitation' of explorer Samuel de Champlain. Du Creux deals next with the city's re-establishment under better auspices in 1632, when France recovered the city conquered three years earlier by the Kirke brothers. The author had covered the events of the seventeen years between Quebec's foundation and the arrival of the Jesuits in broad strokes in the preface to the book.<sup>26</sup> The narrative then continues with a geographic and ethnographic exposition of New France and a summary of the area's natural history. It is this section that will be of special interest to us here.

Two land-dwelling creatures in particular draw Du Creux's attention: the moose, whose various body parts contain astonishing medicinal powers, and

23 For a useful and concise overview of this question, see Alban Baudou, "Les Abeilles et Mélissa, du symbole universel à l'hapax mythologique", *Cahier des études anciennes* 54 (2017): 95–125.

24 "Participant de cette « fascination » que nous avons évoquée pour le monde des abeilles, les interprétations du livre IV des Géorgiques sont légion. Certains ont considéré que Virgile imageait la lutte de l'humanité, de la civilisation et du progrès – Aristée – contre une nature supérieure et destructrice ou simplement obscurantiste – Protée – mais aussi contre ses propres faiblesses morales – il aime une femme mariée – face à un symbole de droiture, de pureté ou de religiosité: Orphée, amoureux légitime, « amantépoux » qui se montre « tout miel ». Marcel Detienne, "Orphée au miel", in Jacques Le Goff et Pierre Nora (eds), *Faire de l'histoire III: nouveaux objets* (Paris: Gallimard, 1974): 56–75.

25 Gilles Havard and Cécile Vidal, *Histoire de l'Amérique française* (Paris: Flammarion, 2014): 173.

26 This summary of New France's natural history is conveniently placed in the context of the year 1629, perhaps reflecting the idea expressed by Du Creux in his preface, that before the arrival and subsequent monopoly of the Jesuits on evangelization efforts in New France, the country was still rather untouched. The work of the Recollet fathers who preceded them had counted for little, as Du Creux thus underlines.

the beaver. To the second of these animals singled out for special treatment the author dedicates three pages of his work – a lengthy treatment in comparison with other features of the natural world. Framing his account in the familiar terms of contemporary natural philosophical discussion, he gives thanks to God for the creation of such a “wonderful” animal at the beginning of his presentation:

Omnino et singulare quoddam munus est iis regionibus a Deo tributum, cujus deinde ut participes esse possint, Nationes ceterae tantopere elaborant, et nullum unum forte animal est, cujus sit admirabilitas major.<sup>27</sup>

[Certainly, in the beaver God has given a remarkable gift to this new country, a gift which other nations are so anxious to share; for there is perhaps no animal that is more wonderful.]<sup>28</sup>

And he does the same at the very end, stressing again the “wonder” of his work:

Haec ut commemorata sunt, ita vidisse homines fide digni asseverant: ex quo intelligas angulum nullum, recessumve orbis terrarum esse, ubi non effector ille mundi et molitor Deus mirabilem sese hominum generi, ex factis operibusve praebeat.<sup>29</sup>

[The statements that I have made are all supported [by trustworthy witnesses], and it is apparent that in the remotest corner of the world, God, the builder and designer of the universe, reveals to the human race the wonders of his works.]<sup>30</sup>

As gift from God and a wonder of nature, the beaver knows a complex form of social organization comparable in several respects to that of the bees in Virgil's *Georgics*. For instance, the ancient poet had written:

Solae communis natos, consortia tecta  
Urbis habent magnisque agitant sub legibus aeuum  
Et patriam solae et certos nouere penates

<sup>27</sup> Du Creux, *Historiae canadensis*, 51.

<sup>28</sup> For the translation of Du Creux's Latin we have followed P.J. Robinson (transl.), *History of Canada*, (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1951). This passage appears on p. 75. We indicate occasional changes that have been made to the original translation in square brackets.

<sup>29</sup> Du Creux, *Historiae canadensis*, 54.

<sup>30</sup> Robinson, *History of Canada*, 75.

Venturaeque hiemis memores aestate laborem  
Experiuntur et in medium quaesita reponunt.<sup>31</sup>

[Alone they have their children in common, share the housing  
Of their city, and pass their lives under exalted laws.  
Alone they recognize a fatherland and a fixed home,  
And mindful of coming winter they set to work in summer  
Setting their produce in a common store.]

While respecting their family bonds, the bees flourish – Virgil wrote – in cities and under a defined framework of laws, as also mankind is expected to behave. We thus stumble on Du Creux's first significant development which parallels the allegory of the bee: for beavers, society is to be maintained by close family ties that involve explicitly here monogamy and the cohabitation of blood relatives:

Quin etiam in unum eundemque larem, paulo laxiorem scilicet, recipiunt  
sese nonnumquam plures, ut ita dicam, familiae, mas videlicet ac femina  
cum seorsum foetibus, ad septem quandoque, vulgo ad quinque sexve.<sup>32</sup>

[Several families, if I may use the term, will occupy one and the same dwelling, which of course has to be a little larger. The family consists of the male and the female with her own young; there are sometimes seven young beavers, usually about five or six.]

Du Creux focuses on the family unit over the city theme emphasized in Virgil, but the function of allegory nonetheless remains the same. Here the importance of family in the Christian thought of seventeenth century Europe undoubtedly motivated Du Creux's careful choice of imagery, just as the Greek ideals of *πολιτεία* motivated the choice of the poet.<sup>33</sup> Whether it be the *urbs* or the *familia*, the main political unit is to be stressed in both depictions, but the cultural change from *urbs* to *familia* is noteworthy and significant of the set of values Du Creux praises here. Moreover, the historian does not hesitate to humanize the beavers' dwellings, using *casula* and the anthropomorphizing terms *lares* and *familia*, just as in Virgil's *penates* and *urbes*, for example.

31 Virgil, *G.* 4.153–157.

32 Du Creux, *Historia Canadensis*, 53.

33 See the article by Bernard Dompnier, "Les religieux et Saint Joseph dans la France de la première moitié du XVII<sup>ème</sup> siècle", *Siècles* 16 (2002): 57–75.

Furthermore, it is only by means of a collective effort, as with bees, that it manages to protect itself from the rigors of the Canadian winter (far harsher than that of the Cisalpine regions):

Illud certius, fibrum autumnno excidere ingentem lignorum vim, partim in domunculam, partim in penum: haec autem posteriora minime inferre casulam, proxime abdere, ipso in flumine lacuve, ad quem, hyemem acturus est: quae ne enatent, neve cum undis congelacient, dum frigor vis est inclementior, deprimere in imum gurgitem, ligno aliquo graviore levioribus superimposito: ad eumque modum concretis licet fluminibus, tuto victitare, ex aquis quod videtur, quantumque, impune depromendo.<sup>34</sup>

[It is quite certain that the beaver cuts down in autumn a great quantity of wood, partly for his own dwelling and partly for food; he does not, however, bring this into his house but hides it close by, in the stream or in the lake in which he is going to spend the winter; and to prevent its floating away or being frozen in with the ice in the severe frosts, he sinks it to the bottom, placing the heavy wood on top of the light; and so, the rivers may be firmly frozen he lives in security and takes from the water what he likes and as much as he likes with impunity.]

The beaver, industrious and providing, thus matches the bee in foresight and similarly makes sure to gather an ample supply of food and building materials for the winter.<sup>35</sup> The importance of communal efforts is likewise reaffirmed in Du Creux's treatment of the beaver:

Quoniam autem ut caedendis lignis singuli, sic comportandis prae corporum tenuitate esse pares nequeunt, mutuas operas inter se commodant, gregatimque per autumnum in densiores abditioresque silvarum recessus conveniunt, and aggestam ramorum struem praegrandum, export paulatim, plures uni eidemque oneri succedentes, perinde ac formicae pro suo modulo [...].<sup>36</sup>

34 Du Creux, *Historiae Canadensis*, 52.

35 Virgil does not fail, of course, to mention the bees' hard work, see for example the passage, at *A.* 1.430–436.

36 Du Creux, *Historiae Canadensis*, 53.

[Since, however, the beavers are unequal individually to the task of cutting and collecting the wood, they arrange to work together, and in autumn go out to collect in groups in the denser and more remote recesses in the woods. There they gather a pile of huge branches, which they bring one at a time, passing what they have to carry from one to the other in turn, exactly like the ants in their little way [...].]

As we see, however, the author quickly moves on to a different concern, somewhat less 'georgic' in tone. At this point Du Creux reverses the central apicultural *topos* to fit the rhetorical needs of his work: whereas the bees require human help in order to develop fully,<sup>37</sup> the beaver is far more autonomous and indeed can even be considered exemplary for mankind. It echoes the contemporary wish for an autonomous colony in New France supplied by local resources, strengthened by Christian faith and values, and thus not relying heavily on metropolitan support to survive.

In the same vein, the fragility of the hive and the patient work of the beekeeper necessary for its maintenance and defence are prominent themes of Virgil's treatment of the bees. The beaver's lodge, quite to the contrary – and as we have already seen in Du Creux's description of its careful construction out of wood – is easy to protect against aggressors, even humans. It is impervious to the combined efforts of the Canadians (here the Aboriginal people) and yields with great difficulty even to the technology of Europeans:

Casulam hyeme figit ad lacuum, fluminumque crepidinem: figura, qualis clibanorum nostrorum arcuata: materies, ligna, tanquam caemento ex gleba pinguiore tam firme inter se colligata compactaque, ut glande quidem plumbea e sclopo labefactare opus possis: vix toto nisu, totaque virium contentione Canadenses effringunt.<sup>38</sup>

[He builds a little house in winter on the banks of lakes and rivers in shape like our dome shaped ovens; it is made of logs and branches fastened so firmly together by a mortar of thick mud that you could not shake the structure with a shot from an arquebus; all the strength of the savages [as well as their combined efforts] hardly break it open.]

Du Creux's insistence on the impregnable stronghold that constitutes the *casula* might bitterly echo the violent capture of Samuel de Champlain's house

37 Virgil, *G.* 4.33–50; 88–102.

38 Du Creux, *Historiae canadensis*, 52.

in 1629, the year being marked suggestively in the margins of the pages containing Du Creux's treatise on natural history.

The beaver's other significant piece of handiwork, the dam, gives our author the opportunity to make two very favourable comparisons. The dam seems equal to the works of the most brilliant architects as it grants the beaver control over the surrounding water like that of a king over his court: [...] *ut ab architectis vel peritissimis elaboratius quidquam expectari vix possit. [...] Porro aquaeum in modum intumescit in stagnum ubi fiber tanquam in aula superbus deinceps imperitet*<sup>39</sup> ("[...] better workmanship could scarcely be expected from a skilled architect. [...] By means of the dam, a pool is [constructed] where the proud beaver commands like a king rules his court"). Moreover, the reader can sense that the beaver, as master of nature, is set against the careless attitude of the autochthonous people, which the authors upon whose previous writings Du Creux based his own *Historia* never fail to mention. Du Creux himself tends, however, towards a more benevolent view of indigenous dwellings and does not insist on the *topoi* of their wild, carefree lifestyle to the extent that we find in his sources.

The contrast is no less great, however, between the rough abodes of the autochthonous people and the comfort enjoyed by the beaver, luxurious even when measured against European expectations. Another anthropomorphic moment now gives the beaver's home a bed as soft as a feather mattress, located on the top floor of a house with several rooms: *Porro in superiori contiguatione cubat, somnumque capit si non in culcitra, certe in lectulo strato molliter, ut pluma, sic junco teneriori*<sup>40</sup> ("In the house the beaver lies in the upper story and though he does not sleep on a mattress, he has a couch of rushes as soft as down"). Du Creux thus accumulates evidence to underline that in the midst of a country characterized by its difficult living conditions, the beaver – with knowledge and social institutions comparable to those of the colonizers – is able to construct an impregnable bastion, well equipped for the sterile winter and decked out with appreciable comforts. If we are right to assume from these excerpts that the beaver appears as a model for the European colonist and missionary opposed to the indigenous people, it could do so through the language of God's *mirabilia*. Belonging to the realm of the preternatural – and not the supernatural, which had been formally distinguished from *miracula* ("miracles") by natural philosophers since the medieval period – these were considered a concealed message to men from the Creator, in which he revealed

39 Du Creux, *Historiae canadensis*, 53.

40 Du Creux, *Historiae canadensis*, 54.



his providence in the design of the natural world.<sup>41</sup> As we have seen, Du Creux states explicitly the marvellous nature of the beaver in his account and frames his treatment of the beaver in precisely these terms.

In addition to the interest of the curious reader for these New World *mirabilia*, we may ask ourselves *cui bono*; does this kind of 'bee' benefit anyone? Does it serve, other than ideologically, the European project of colonization and evangelization? Since economic imperatives played a prominent role in colonial development and since the first virtue of the bee is of course its product, honey – or *caelestia dona*<sup>42</sup> ("heaven's gift") – we also find that the beaver, whose fur is very much admired, is not exactly averse to being hunted and serve commercial interests. The ancient fable had already noted the beaver's passivity in castrating itself to avoid capture. The North American beaver can be caught equally defenceless and unawares by surprising it in its movement between forest and dam. Du Creux emphasizes the sustenance thus amassed by the natives in all likelihood as an enticement to future beaver hunters:

Sed enim solertem animantem non tutatur sua sagacitas: belluam tam utilem, ad ususque tam multos accomodatam, victus, vestitus, mercaturae, pari industria Canadenses pervestigant, nunc insidiis struendis, dum e silvis in domunculam, e domuncula in silvas se confert, nunc sub altissima glacie delitescendem urgendo: tanquam autem vim capiunt, ut in uno eodem convivio appositi fibri centum and viginti perhibeantur.<sup>43</sup>

[But truly the sagacity of this clever animal is not enough to protect him. This creature so useful for clothing, and for trade, is hunted by the natives with corresponding industry. They lie in wait for him as he passes from the woods to his house and from the house to the woods; they pursue him when he takes refuge under the thickest ice; and they capture beavers in such numbers that it is said that a hundred and twenty are served in a single feast.]

41 For a convenient account of this well studied feature of medieval and early modern thought see Lorraine Daston and Katherine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature 150–1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001): 120–122. A more detailed treatment of the topic in the wider context of views about nature is available in Lorraine Daston, "The Nature of Nature in Early Modern Europe". *Configurations* 6, no. 2 (1998): 149–172.

42 Virgil, *G.* 4.1.

43 Du Creux, *Historiae canadensis*, 54.

Trade, colonization, and evangelization went hand in hand, as stated in Du Creux's dedicatory letter to members of the Company of West Indies.<sup>44</sup> A short passage, emphasizing the beaver's solidarity and commitment to the common good – once again expressly in terms of the animal's "wonderful" nature – also encourages further those of the Old World to join the New, brothers to respond to their vocation as missionaries, and pioneers to go further in their explorations of America's rivers:

Sed mirabilius quod sequitur: si quando angustia loci premuntur nimium, sic, ut alii aliis inconvenient, sunt qui abscedant ultro, convasentque, et novas sedes inquiriunt ad aquarum fluentia,

[More wonderful still, if they become so crowded as to inconvenience one another, part of them will withdraw voluntarily, take their belongings with them, and look for new abodes along the banks of the streams.]<sup>45</sup>

In summary, the expression of a will to establish a Christian stronghold in a land surrounded by dangers effectively reproduces the state of mind in which the missionary looked upon his work. Like the beaver, colonists and missionaries build a well-kept 'habitation' such as Champlain's which, as the dam masters the river, sets its rational order in opposition to the carelessness of the indigenous people. This last passage also adds that the allegory contains an example as well as a promise: like the beaver who knows when to leave home and establish its own lodge, the missionaries and colonists have also left home in due time to found new settlements far away, and they will do likewise as the colony grows.

Further, the defenceless beaver facing hungry indigenous hunters echoes the fate of priests in the hands of Canadian natives. New France's well-known dramatic martyrdom narratives unsurprisingly occupy an important place in

44 Du Creux, *Historia canadensis*, Preface [section unpaginated]: *Cum enim Patres Societatis nostrae unam Dei spirent spectentque gloriam, cujus tutelam et amplitudinem solitudini vestrae Deus ipse commisit, nisi vestras ita rebus suis implicatas vellent, ut eas disjungi non posse, sine ultima Christianitatis labe, factis verbisque faterentur.* "[...] the Fathers of our Society have breath and vision only for the glory of God, but God himself has entrusted the protection and extension of that glory to your care, and they would certainly err greatly did they not desire your enterprise so closely bound up with their own that they must acknowledge in every way that they cannot be separated without final disgrace to Christianity".

45 Du Creux, *Historiae canadensis*, 53. In 1664 new and faster ways of reaching Japan and China were still being actively sought, as Du Creux mentions in the same introductory letter.

Du Creux's work. The hunt for beavers undertaken by the autochthonous peoples is likely to be compared with the quest for martyrdom: if beavers allow themselves to be caught by natives to give them their fur, that is to say their living stock, the missionaries face death with the same resignation in order to bring salvation and eternal life to the autochthonous peoples. Both of these sacrifices thus benefit these barren lands, the first from an economic point of view, the second from the spiritual. Thus, the allegory of the beaver finally takes us back to the dedication of priests and the benefit they bring to New France on these two levels.

Qui supersunt in Nova Francia Nostrae Societatis homines *eandem mortem ambiunt* et jampridem exspectant, neque vivere volunt, nisi, *dum venantur animas*, gloriose ac fortiter moriantur. Erunt hi omnes negotiorum vestorum [The Company of the West Indies] partim in coelo patroni, partim apud Deum e terris procuratores; eorumque sanguis ac sudor Christianorum semen erit, quod sine praesidio, tutela vestra crescere nequit.

[The members of our Society in New France who still survive *are ambitious for a like death*, and for this they have long been waiting; nor do they wish to live, unless they may die gloriously and bravely *in their hunt for souls*. All of them will be your patrons in Heaven, or they will be your stewards before God upon earth. Their blood and sweat will be the seed of a Church that cannot grow without your help and protection.]<sup>46</sup>

The persecuted missionaries, hunted down by Iroquois, have turned metaphorically into posthumous hunters of souls whose voluntary death ensures the spiritual 'sustenance' of the colony, just like the beavers who offer themselves to be caught in order that New France rise and grow.

The beaver, a "marvellous" animal, reflected a New France as its colonizers conceived of it in their dreams: a society ruled by the new Christian ideals of family and work, an impregnable bastion that could serve as a base from which to launch new discoveries, not to mention a new and opulent metropolis, thus meeting the expectations of the project's impatient investors. Revealed in Du Creux's account as one of God's "wonders" – the Creator's guidelines for mankind concealed in his provident organization of the natural world – and expressed in an allegorical form which readers would recognize from the classical tradition, the example of the beaver thus belonged to the evidence that

46 Du Creux, *Historiae canadensis*, [section unpaginated].

missionaries and colonizers were able to identify in the New World to motivate and endorse their efforts. On another level, it is convenient to observe that depictions of beavers such as this stand out as an instance of what later criticism has called the *épistémè*, after Foucault's *Les Mots et les choses*, providing examples of how these features of a culture's unconscious apparatus were deeply woven into a literary genre – *historia* – with claims towards truth.<sup>47</sup> Du Creux's concerns about historical truth in fact implied recourse to the allegorical: beavers were one of nature's *mirabilia*, "wonders". The case thus reminds us that no natural phenomenon of such importance could occur, in the early modern mind, without imbedded political or spiritual views. Whether they be *Relations*, *Journals*, *Histoires*, or even the *Georgics*, these works revolve around the idea of an all-encompassing truth where the study of natural philosophy intersects with civic organization.

#### 4 The Reception of Du Creux's Allegorical "Turn"

The Jesuits had a monopoly on evangelization in the Quebec area and composed the lion's share of New France's literature in the first half of the seventeenth century. Indeed, it is this very prominence that may have inspired later authors to contest their views on the ideas they published. Accordingly, in literary representations of the beaver – more polemical than ever after Du Creux's treatment – authors would now concentrate on their allegorical use or "ideological function".<sup>48</sup>

The *New Voyages* of Baron de Lahontan (1666–ca. 1716) are representative of how contention with Jesuit politics could be communicated through an author's depiction of the beaver.<sup>49</sup> What had been central to the Jesuit image of the animal is now mocked as a mere dream born in a darkened study, and Lahontan begins a prominent passage on the beaver by dismissing their aquatic

47 Foucault develops the now well-accepted notion of the *épistémè* primarily in Michel Foucault, *Les Mots et les Choses: Une archéologie des sciences humaines* (Paris: Gallimard, 1966). The idea was further employed in his *L'Archéologie du savoir*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1969).

48 Sayre, *Les Sauvages Américains*, 226.

49 Lahontan's *New Voyages* saw numerous French editions during the seventeenth century. Contrary to modern editors Réal Ouellet and Alain Beaulieu (Louis-Armand de Lahontan: *Œuvres complètes*, Montréal, QC: Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1990, 2 vol.) and Maxime Gohier (*Un Baptême Iroquois*, Lyon: Le Passager clandestin, 2015) we shall retain here the text of the work's second edition of 1705 instead of the first (1703), where the beaver's depiction is notably extended and Lahontan's geographical whereabouts for each episode are more directly expressed.

nature – an important issue among contemporaries during Lent<sup>50</sup> – which sets the tone for Lahontan's rendering of beaver society. Here his aim is to criticize the overarching power of clerics. Two different kinds of beavers appear in his description: a terrestrial species and one suited to rivers. The terrestrial ones, Lahontan reports the Natives as saying, were the lazy, indolent, sluggish individuals that the hard-working river beavers – the superior species – expelled from their communities. Lahontan here makes Du Creux's earlier bee comparison explicit, when he describes these two sorts of beavers as wasps and bees respectively:

Les Castors laborieux ne peuvent souffrir les faineants Terriens, et ils s'acharnent sur eux avec tant d'opiniâtreté que ceux-ci sont contraint d'abandonner la partie, et de s'éloigner entièrement des étangs, et des Lacs, de la même manière, et pour la même raison que les Guespes sont chassées des ruches.<sup>51</sup>

[The hard-working beavers cannot tolerate the loathsome terrestrial species, and they persecute them with so much obstinacy that the latter are forced to abandon their areas, and move away from the ponds and the lakes, in the same way, and for the same reason, that wasps are chased out of beehives.]

These two species of beaver largely look alike and share the same habitat, but, Lahontan then goes on to report, they differ slightly in appearance, since terrestrial beavers spoil their fur by coming in and out of their underground palaces. The irony of the 'ground' beavers, who live 'underground', suggests a concern for the literary over the value of fact. It signals to the reader that this whole passage is to be read at another level and, unfurling the metaphor, we can recall a well-known *topos* of anti-clerical literature: the flamboyant hypocrisy or 'tartufferie' of clergymen – apparently worthy of life above ground, but residing under it – and their living off donations.

This anti-clerical strain continues when Lahontan asks himself what sort of distracted naturalists might have come up with the fable of the beaver's self-castration. Not only do beavers obviously dread capture, and contrive numerous hideouts to escape it, but any diligent observer, like Lahontan himself,

50 Gagnon, *Images du castor canadien*, 29 (n. 30).

51 Louis Armand, Baron de Lahontan, *Voyages dans l'Amérique Septentrionale*. (The Hague: Frères L'Honoré, 1705): vol. 1, 181.

must acknowledge that male beavers do not go against nature in this way. Maintaining the opposite is, to Lahontan, to share in some illogical belief:

[...] il n'est point vrai que les Castors se mutilent, et se fassent eunuques pour échaper à la trop pressante poursuite des Chasseurs. Non ces mâles estiment plus leur sexe et font plus de cas que cela de la propagation de leur rare espèce. Je ne puis même concevoir sur quel fondement on a bâti une si grande chimère.<sup>52</sup>

[It is by no means true that beavers mutilate themselves and make themselves eunuchs in order to escape the hunter's pressing pursuit. No, the males of this species think much more highly of their sex and, indeed, pay more attention to the spread of their rare breed than this [their supposed emasculation]. I cannot even conceive on what basis such a great chimerical idea was constructed.]

With the mention of eunuchs here Lahontan likely evokes sexual abstinence and the priests who hold to it. Clerics were thus victims of self-deception and prone to emphasizing what in nature's realm appeared to support their positions, such as Aelian's beavers. In truth, a beaver would not be able, he claims, to castrate himself without severely damaging the nerves of its groin and "pubic bone". This leads Lahontan to an astute *praeteritio*,<sup>53</sup> suggesting that no beaver – like no reasonable man – would ever emasculate himself either literally or figuratively.<sup>54</sup>

The later Jesuit historian Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix (1682–1761) establishes for his part a more precise description of the beaver than any of his predecessors, while at the same time also looking back at its previous metaphorical uses. In the fifth letter of his *Voyages*, he dedicates considerable attention to the bee comparison and goes as far as to sum up Du Creux's allegory in a neat tag-line: *Ils [les castors] sont au moins parmi les quadrupedes ce que les abeilles sont parmi les insectes volatiles*, ("They [the beavers] are among quadrupeds at least what the bees are among flying insects"). In a further consonance with Du Creux, Charlevoix regards the beavers' organization as evidence of God's will to create and make use of natural wonders: beavers are not to be

52 Lahontan, *Voyages*, 182.

53 Lahontan, *Voyages*, 182.

54 There is the famous depiction of beaver society as a republic in the second book of Lahontan's *Voyages*, which has received, as we have seen, considerable scholarly attention. Here, without referring to bees, he sets the natives' apparent carelessness in contrast to the beaver's organization, their use of their body parts as tools, and of sentries.

understood as successfully forming communities governed by means akin to those of human societies; rather this apparent similarity should be interpreted as a divine sign from which mankind should learn. Earlier vernacular depictions of beaver society as monarchic, aristocratic, or republican are thus misleading as they fail to help us recognize that it is at heart divine providence.<sup>55</sup> But while he recalls those comparisons,<sup>56</sup> Charlevoix makes use of them in a different fashion. For example, recalling what Lahontan wrote about terrestrial and river beavers, Charlevoix would reject it out of hand as indigenous superstition. Indirect speech appears here as a way to emphasize the distance between truth and those beliefs:

Les Sauvages étoient autrefois persuadés, si on en croit quelques Relations, que les Castors étoient une espèce d'animal raisonnable, qui avoit ses loix, son gouvernement et son langage particulier: que ce peuple amphibie se choisissoit des commandans, qui dans les travaux communs distribuoi-ent à chacun sa tâche, posoient des sentinelles pour crier à l'approche de l'ennemi, punissoient, ou exiloient les paresseux. Ces prétendus exilés sont apparemment ceux qu'on appelle castors terriers [...].<sup>57</sup>

[The natives were formerly convinced, if we trust the *Relations*, that beavers were an animal endowed with reason, which had its own laws, government and social language; that this amphibian community chose leaders, who then gave to each his tasks in their communal projects, who set up watchmen to alert as to an enemy's approach, and who punished or exiled lazy individuals. These supposed exiles are those which we call 'land beavers', apparently [...].]

55 Pierre-François-Xavier de Charlevoix, *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle France, avec le Journal historique d'un voyage fait par ordre du roi dans l'Amérique septentrionale* (Paris: Nyon, 1744): vol. 3, 100: Peut-être après tout n'en est-on si étonné, que faute de remonter à cette Intelligence suprême, qui se sert de ces Êtres dénués de raison, pour mieux faire éclatter sa sagesse et sa puissance et pour nous faire sentir que notre raison même est presque toujours par notre présomption la cause de nos égaremens, "Perhaps, after all, we are so much astonished by this that it is impossible to trace it back to that supreme intelligence, which makes use of these beings devoid of reason in order to make his wisdom and power shine, and to make us feel that our reason itself is almost always the cause of our errors by presumption". On the beavers as alternatively monarchic, aristocratic, or republican see Gagnon, *Images du castor canadien*, 65–114 (summed up in Francis, "The Strange Career of the Canadian Beaver", 211–215).

56 Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage*, vol. 3, 100.

57 Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage*, vol. 3, 103.

He means to warn his readers that metaphors are to be understood as such and so refuses to engage further in the debate with Lahontan about the ideal state and social organization. Having discussed and dismissed the formal, allegorical use to which beaver society had been put, he nonetheless admits its literary potential and exclaims: "C'est bien dommage, Madame, qu'il ne se soit point trouvé de ces admirables animaux ni dans le Tybre, ni dans le Permesse: que de belles choses ils auroient fait dire aux poètes grecs et romains" ("It is a great shame, Madame, that these admirable animals are not to be found in the Tiber, nor in the Permessus: what wonderful things they would have brought to the lips of the Greek and Roman poets").<sup>58</sup>

A later author did indeed heed this call and pick up on Du Creux's beaver/bee model for a poetic rendering of the ideal social structure in Europe's American colonial enterprise. The outstanding Latin poem, *Rusticatio Mexicana* (Modena, 1781/82), of Guatemalan Jesuit Rafael Landívar, describing the geography, natural environment, and societies of Mesoamerica in no fewer than fifteen books, has even been dubbed 'The Epic of America' in its standard modern edition, though – as the editor himself notes – Virgil's *Georgics* stands out as the primary poetic model.<sup>59</sup> The sixth book of the *Rusticatio Mexicana* is dedicated entirely to beavers and offers a wonderfully detailed poetic version of our now-familiar anthropomorphic allegory of the beaver's social habits and organization. Landívar's interpretation of the beaver has been well studied,<sup>60</sup> though the extent to which his poetic expansion on the theme responds to his *confrère* Du Creux's allegorical turn over a century earlier and the subsequent reactions in writing from across the "New World" – particularly that of his other Jesuit brother, the aforementioned Charlevoix – has yet to have been fully appreciated.

The fact that the sixth book of Landívar's Neo-Latin Jesuit didactic epic poem calls on Virgil's bees (*G.* 4.149–250) for its depiction of an anthropomorphized utopian animal society comes as no surprise. The success of this literary *topos* was enormous throughout European literature and – significantly

58 Charlevoix, *Journal d'un voyage*, vol. 3, 104.

59 Andrew Laird, *The Epic of America: An Introduction to Rafael Landívar and the Rusticatio Mexicana* (London: Duckworth, 2006). For Landívar's sources and models for the work, Virgil's *Georgics* as foremost among them, see pp. 45–6.

60 Kerson, "The Republic of Beavers"; Antony Higgins, *Constructing the Criollo Archive: Subjects of Knowledge in the Bibliotheca Mexicana and the Rusticatio Mexicana* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2000): 177–186; Marcela Alejandra Suárez, "La utopía de los castores o la representación del espacio americano en el L. VI de la *Rusticatio Mexicana*", in *Las Metáforas del viaje y sus imágenes. La Literatura de viajeros como problema* (Univerisidad Nacional de Rosario, 2005): 1–14.



for Landívar – was picked up in French Jesuit poet Jacques Vanière's *Praedium Rusticum* (1746), a key contemporary source for our Guatemalan writer.<sup>61</sup> That Landívar should choose the beaver as his model for the utopian society of the New World towards the end of the eighteenth century is no more surprising. As we have seen, the triumph of this animal allegory resounds frequently in early modern literature about the natural world on the American continent, in particular in writings about New France. Indeed, in his hugely influential *Histoire Naturelle, générale et particulière* (1749–1804), Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, based his detailed description of the animal on a young specimen he had received directly from Canada.<sup>62</sup> Here, aside from listing Charlevoix prominently among his sources for other descriptions<sup>63</sup> and commenting at length on the social behavior of the animal,<sup>64</sup> Buffon repeats – almost literally – Charlevoix's summary of the beaver tradition in literature on New France after Du Creux's allegorical turn: "Les castors, dira-t-on, parmi les quadrupèdes ce que les abeilles sont parmi les insectes"<sup>65</sup> ("Beavers, so to say, are among four-legged animals as the bees among insects"). The direct source for Landívar's account of the beaver's appearance, habits, and lifestyle was Buffon's student Jacques-Christophe Valmont de Bomare,<sup>66</sup> who's own account of the *castor* in turn draws heavily on Buffon.<sup>67</sup>

If the trail of citations, resonances and responses leading from Du Creux to Landívar – via later writings about New France and natural history, which crossed the Atlantic and large parts of the American continent – appears at this point to be somewhat sinuous, a focused glance at the Jesuit tradition offers a convenient précis of the development of the beaver's literary symbolism. Du Creux's account of New France's beavers is a true prose allegory: beneath

61 Kerson, "The Republic of Beavers", 18.

62 Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière, avec la description du cabinet du Roi* (Paris: Imprimerie Royal, 1760) vol. 8: 282–332 (the author's note on his captive specimen appears at 287, n. a).

63 See the list of first-person observations of the beaver in Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, 298–99, n. 1.

64 Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, 283–301.

65 Buffon, *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière*, 283. Buffon does not credit here Charlevoix for this formulation.

66 Our poet cites Jacques-Christophe Valmont de Bomare's *Dictionnaire raisonné universel d'histoire naturelle* (Paris: Didot, 1764–68) and its chapter on the beaver (1764, vol. 1, 471–482) in French in the notes to his Latin text. For the note in the second 1782 edition, not printed in the 2006 edition referenced above, see Rafael Landívar, *Rusticatio mexicana editio altera auctior et emendatior* (Bologna: S. Thomae Aquinatis, 1782): 62.

67 An overview of Landívar's reliance on Bomare and Buffon, which misses out, however, on the influence of Charlevoix's summary of Du Creux for the idea of beaver's as America's bees detailed here, is available in Kerson, "The Republic of Beavers", 18–19.

the description of the animal and its apparent social organization lies an ideal for colonial and Jesuit missionary communities, modelled on Virgil's bees and revealing God's "marvellous" and provident design of this part of the natural world for the benefit of mankind. Numerous authors picked up Du Creux's message and wrote extensively on beavers as ideal examples for systems of human governance. In a work that sought to move past metaphorical and allegorical engagement with the beaver, Father Charlevoix nonetheless acknowledged the idea's potential literary merit while his œuvre encompassing the histories of Paraguay, Japan, Saint-Domingue (Haiti) as well as of Canada was well-known to anyone interested in colonization issues. His 1744 *Histoire et description générale de la Nouvelle-France* contains not only a pithy summary of Du Creux's earlier Virgilian comparison but also laments that the literary potential of the allegory had not been fully harnessed. Here Landívar responds nearly forty years later with exactly that, setting Du Creux's allegory in Book VI of his *Rusticatio mexicana* in explicitly Virgilian terms.

## 5 Conclusion

The Guatemalan Landívar's expansion on this earlier Jesuit literature about the New World, especially that of Charlevoix, becomes clear in his choice to make the beaver his 'bee' for the New World and underlines the impact of Du Creux's innovative account of the animal as a model for social structure in the American colonies over a century earlier. As we have seen, by the late eighteenth century the beaver's anthropomorphic allegorization was so widespread and so oft-repeated (including by means of the same expressions, as with Charlevoix and Buffon) that it had become a commonplace in its own right. The ambiguity in Landívar's application of the allegory to the structure of indigenous society or colonial populations perhaps serves, then, to indicate that the idea had now acquired the status of a self-standing literary *topos*:<sup>68</sup> the beaver was the New World's bee and its use as a model image for society in a literary rendering of parts of America's civilization and natural world was now expected by readers, who could make up their own mind as to its applications and meaning. It thus stands out as an example of the 'parallel processes' involved in the transmission of Classics in the Americas, as well as an outstanding illustration of how a literary engagement with a feature of the northernmost American landscape could influence poetic treatment of *realia* in the meso-american context. While not precisely 'transhemispherical' in the

68     Laird, *The Epic of America*, 70.

geographical relationship between these literary connections, the example nonetheless serves to blur the numerous lines drawn on the continent that we still see today.

Moreover, for our understanding of Du Creux's work and its representation of early Jesuit missionary activity in New France, it is significant that the beaver's depiction underwent its allegorical shift in the *Historia Canadensis*. The Jesuit historian wrote what was – in the classical sense of this term – a genuine history, different in nature from the contemporary *Relations*. Composed in Latin, it referred more directly to the bulk of knowledge drawn from ancient and Christian literary sources than vernacular works. While scholarship has long overlooked Du Creux's work in their search for original sources, a close reading of the text, with an eye on the author's literary resources, reveals its significance for a better understanding of seventeenth-century attitudes towards colonization, the ideal state and evangelization; attitudes often engaged in early Modern authors' renderings of the American experience which Michael Brumbaugh also discusses in this volume.

In the 'wondrous' beaver allegory, Du Creux discerned instructions for the ideal arrangement of his brothers' mission in New France. Exactly how God's marvellous providence in the example of the beaver was interpreted – as relevant to colonists or to the indigenous populations, or in terms of republican, aristocratic, or monarchist society – remained a topic of intense debate over the next century at least, as outlined above. Indeed, the search for evidence from the New World on which thinkers could base their concepts of an ideal social structure had been ongoing since the work of Peter Martyr and Michel de Montaigne.<sup>69</sup> That such knowledge might be available from the New World's natural *mirabilia* was an important hermeneutic tool inherited from the classical tradition, where the example of Virgil's bees is pre-eminent. Here, in turn, the technique of allegory in written texts allows efficient and effective transmission of a natural phenomenon's meaning and significance for culture at large. Earlier scholarship has already demonstrated the influence of Old World myths on European actions and behavior,<sup>70</sup> and the Jesuits' belief in establishing forms of πολιτεία in cultures on the other side of the Atlantic is similarly

69 Stelio Cro, "Classical Antiquity, America, and the Myth of the Noble Savage", in: Haase, W. and Reinhold, M. *The Classical Tradition and the Americas*, vol. I *European Images of the Americas and the Classical Tradition: Part 1* (Berlin, New York, NY: De Gruyter, 1994): 379–418, 401.

70 Jean-Pierre Sánchez, "Myths and Legends in the Old World and European Expansionism on the American Continent", in: Haase, W. and Reinhold, M. *The Classical Tradition and the Americas*, vol. I *European Images of the Americas and the Classical Tradition: Part 1* (Berlin, New York, NY: De Gruyter: 1994): 189–240, 190.

recognized.<sup>71</sup> That a Jesuit historian might turn to an allegorical representation of the New World's natural *mirabilia* on the model of a well-known episode in classical literature to motivate, justify and shape his Order's missionary work in New France, and that this allegory would then go on to loom so large in debates over ideals for the area's social structure, has thus far been unappreciated, however. Reading Du Creux's history as literature, then, leads to a broader understanding of how authors debated and generated concepts for the New World's colonization on grounds both factual and allegorical.

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<sup>71</sup> See n. 33 above.

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## The Fall of Troy in Old Huronia: The Letters of Paul Ragueneau on the Destruction of Wendake, 1649–1651

Zachary Yuzwa

Paul Ragueneau recounts the burning of the Jesuit mission village at Sainte-Marie among the Hurons and remarks: “We watched our labours of nearly ten years consumed in a moment”.<sup>1</sup> Faced with the relentless incursions of the Haudenosaunee, the Jesuit missionaries and their Wendat allies resolved that they would themselves put their village to flame and flee across the waters to the island Gahoendoe, off the shore of Georgian Bay. In the face of ruin, the Wendat, and the Jesuits among them, chose exile. On Gahoendoe, called Ile Saint-Joseph by the French, the Wendat endured a year of famine. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, died between the spring of 1649 and the spring of 1650, when a few hundred of those Wendat who remained on the island chose to abandon their new settlement. With their traditional territory lost to them, these Wendat, alongside the Jesuits who served their community, set out on a

1 “Atque adeo una die ac fere momento absumi vidimus labores nostros decem propemodum annorum”, in Lucien Campeau, ed., *Monumenta Novae Franciae*, vol. 7 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1994), 655. Hereafter, all references to Ragueneau’s letters will come from Campeau’s edition, identified by document and section number. Campeau collected and published source documents from and about New France in a series of nine volumes, whose contents span the period 1602–1661; Lucien Campeau, ed., *Monumenta Novae Franciae*, 9 vols. (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1967–2003). Some of Ragueneau’s Latin letters were also published in Thwaites’s monumental collection, *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents*, 73 vols. (Cleveland: Burrows Bros., 1896–1901). The relative merits of these collections have been debated at length; cf. Luca Codignola, “The Battle is Over: Campeau’s *Monumenta* vs. Thwaites’s *Jesuit Relations*, 1602–1650”, *European Review of Native American Studies* 19, no. 2 (1996): 3–10 and Micah True, “Is It Time for a New Edition of the *Jesuit Relations* from New France? Campeau vs. Thwaites”, *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada/Cahiers de la Société Bibliographique du Canada* 51 (2014): 261–79. Both Codignola and True decide in favor of Campeau, though Thwaites remains important, both because the temporal span of his collection is longer and his work was the standard for so long; cf. Bronwen McShea, *Apostles of Empire: The Jesuits and New France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2019), xxix. I have consulted Thwaites’s translation when one is available, but unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.



journey of exile that would take them – only after months of travel over land and river – to the French settlement at Quebec.<sup>2</sup>

The traditional territory of the Wendat is Wendake, called Huronia by the French, just as its people were called Hurons. It comprised a series of villages situated along the southern shores of Georgian Bay, in present-day Ontario, Canada. French Jesuits first undertook a mission to the Wendat in 1626. They built their mission fort at Sainte-Marie in 1639. Within ten years of that establishment, the Wendat, devastated by disease and violent conflict, were brought to the brink of annihilation, their settlements destroyed and Wendake abandoned completely.<sup>3</sup> A Jesuit missionary, writing a grammar of the Wendat language almost a hundred years after these events, calls the land *Wendake ehen*, “Wendake that used to be”, or as he puts it in French, “la défunte Huronie”.<sup>4</sup>

Paul Ragueneau, the Jesuit superior of the mission among the Hurons, renders an account of the destruction of Wendake and the subsequent exile of the Wendat in a series of letters addressed to his superiors in Paris and Rome. The accounts sent to Paris and written in French are included in those famous missionary reports – *relations* – published yearly by Cramoisy for an eager reading public. These *relations* have been widely studied, both by historians as an

2 The most frequently cited sources for this narrative are the *relations* of 1648/9 and 1650, in Campeau *MNF* 7.131 and 7.160. A similar history, if much abridged, is recounted in the letters discussed in this article: Campeau *MNF* 7.87, 104, 140, 146, 156. An important revisionist study that considers the agency of the Wendat themselves in the events precedent and subsequent to the destruction of Wendake is Kathryn Labelle, *Dispersed but not Destroyed: A History of the Seventeenth-Century Wendat People* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013). Labelle is responding to the work of scholars whose studies of the Wendat regularly end with the Wendat dispersal in 1650; cf. Bruce Trigger, *The Huron: Farmers of the North* (London: Wadsworth, 1969) and *Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1976).

3 The “discourse of destruction” has been over-emphasized by historians, as Labelle has demonstrated in *Dispersed But Not Destroyed*, 196–214. The Wendat did in fact disperse but found ways to reintegrate themselves into the changing networks of exchange in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region: a small group joined the French at Quebec, some went west to the Straits of Michilimackinac, some found community among other First Nations, like the Petun and the Haudenosaunee. See also Thomas Peace and Kathryn Labelle, eds. *From Huronia to Wendakes: Adversity, Migrations and Resilience, 1650–1900* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016) on the “calculated strategy of dispersal” (29) that characterized Wendat decision-making in the period immediately following their departure from Gahoendoe and in the diverse communities they would establish in subsequent centuries.

4 Pierre Potier, *Elementa Grammatica Huronica* (1751), 28, The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, 0100-0875.2.1. The Jesuit archivist and historian A.E. Jones sees an echo in this formula of that famous phrase of Virgil, “fuit Ilium” (*Aen.* 2.325); in A.E. Jones, “Wendake Ehen”, or Old Huronia. Bureau of Archives for the Province of Ontario, *Fifth Report*, 1908. (Toronto: Cameron, 1909), 402.

essential source for the early contact period in the eastern woodlands of North America and also, in response to that historical work, by scholars interested in the ways that the rhetorical contours of these texts are formed by literary tradition and shape contemporary discourses of colonialism.<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, the letters sent to the general superior of the Jesuits at Rome and written in Latin are generally regarded as a kind of abridged translation of the presumed French original – they seem to add very little to our knowledge of this history as it actually happened – and have therefore attracted little attention.<sup>6</sup>

These Latin letters merit further study. Even if similar in substance to the cognate accounts in the *relations* sent to France, the letters to Rome are distinct texts with distinct aims and audiences. They are addressed to Vincenzo Carafa and later to his successor as general superior, Francesco Piccolomini; they presume an audience familiar with classical literature (and, naturally enough, Christian scripture). The self-conscious Latinity of this epistolary corpus compels the reader to confront the historiographical assumptions that underlie its production. In this paper, I argue that Ragueneau writes the destruction of Wendake and the exile of the Jesuits and their Wendat allies as a repetition of the fall of Troy and the flight of the Trojans. Ragueneau establishes that relationship by his recourse to Virgilian intertexts: these include everything from the repetition of words that recall essential thematic elements of the *Aeneid* – especially *pietas*, *furor*, *labor*, and the language of flight or exile – to more substantial quotations, including nearly complete lines of hexameter. These allusions to Virgil's epic are generative, in the sense that they propose

5 Important historical studies that rely on the *relations* include Trigger, *The Huron* and Trigger, *Children of Aataentsic*; Lucien Campeau, *La Mission des Jésuites chez les Hurons, 1634–1650* (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1987); Alain Beaulieu, *Convertir les Fils de Caïn: Jésuites et Amérindiennes Nomades en Nouvelle France, 1632–1642* (Montréal: Nuit Blanche Editeur, 1990); Carole Blackburn, *Harvest of souls: The Jesuit Missions and Colonialism in North America 1632–1650* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000); Labelle, *Dispersed But Not Destroyed*. Work that attends especially to questions of discourse or rhetoric include Guy Laflèche, *Les Saints Martyrs Canadiens: Histoire du Mythe* (Laval: Singulier, 1989); Réal Ouellet and Alain Beaulieu, eds. *Rhétorique et Conquête Missionnaire: le Jésuite Paul Lejeune* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1993); Marie-Christine Pioffet, *La Tentation de l'Épopée dans les Relations des Jésuites* (Sillery: Septentrion, 1997); Micah True, *Masters and Students: Jesuit Mission Ethnography in Seventeenth-Century New France* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

6 Ragueneau's Latin letters have not been studied at all. Gallucci has written on the Latin writings of Isaac Jogues, one of the so-called "Canadian Martyrs" and a contemporary of Ragueneau in the missionary field; John Gallucci, "I began to teach [...]: Emotion and Performance in Isaac Jogues's Letter to Father Jean Filleau", in *Changing Hearts: Performing Jesuit Emotions between Europe, Asia and the Americas*, eds. Raphaële Garrod and Yasmin Haskell (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 167–86.

a kind of etiology for the Jesuit experience in New France: Ragueneau offers a retrospective vision of these events that allows him, his community, and his epistolary audience to find meaning in a traumatic present that nevertheless emerges from a familiar mythic past, a past that even suggests some hope for the future.<sup>7</sup> Ragueneau's allusions serve a function cognate to the letter itself: they bridge the gap between addressee and author, between Rome and the furthest reaches of the Canadian wilderness, by constructing a narrative situation in which the fall of Wendake can exist in a continuous history that likewise encompasses the fall of Troy.<sup>8</sup>

## 1 Jesuit Epistolography and the Discourse of Colonialism

Jesuit mission epistolography has long been treated as essentially documentary in nature, even when scholars acknowledge the complex demands of reading sources whose content is often driven by considerations that work contrary to simple reportage.<sup>9</sup> But it is essential we recognize that the global system of communication developed by the Jesuit order to connect missions across a huge geographic expanse in turn produced a set of generic expectations that conditioned the literary production of epistolary reports from the field. Markus Friedrich has shown how the development of a recognizably Jesuit approach to lettered governance “allowed for a systematic use of recent missionary reports in the process of global identity construction”.<sup>10</sup> The *litterae annuae* sent by missionaries in the field to metropolitan Jesuits in Europe participated in a discursive programme that would allow the order to promote a coherent sense of unity and shared experience across its vastly dispersed spheres of activity. Ignatius Loyola, the Society's founder, is clear about the expectation of regular correspondence already in the *Constitutions*: “Still another very special help

7 Greene, in his work on receptions of Virgil in Renaissance poetry, discussed the aetiological function of classical allusions; Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 16–19.

8 Altman, in her foundational work on epistolary fiction theorizes the bridging or mediating function of the epistolary situation; Janet Gurkin Altman, *Epistolarity: Approaches to a Form* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), 13–46.

9 Cf. Takao Abé, “What Determined the Content of Missionary Reports? ‘The Jesuit Relations’ Compared with the Iberian Jesuit Accounts”, *French Colonial History* 3 (2003): 69–83.

10 Markus Friedrich, “On Reading Missionary Correspondence: Jesuit Theologians on the Spiritual Benefits of a New Genre”, in *Cultures of Communication: Theologies of Media in Early Modern Europe and Beyond*, eds. Helmut Puff, Ulrike Strasser, and Christopher Wild (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 188.

will be found in the exchange of letters between the subjects and the superiors, through which they learn about one another frequently and hear the news and reports which come from the various regions. The superiors, especially the general and the provincials, will take charge of this, by providing an arrangement through which each region can learn from the others whatever promotes mutual consolation and edification in our Lord".<sup>11</sup> This epistolary exchange eventually served to furnish edifying narratives designed to render the author's experience in the missionary field a kind of exemplary model for a global Jesuit audience.<sup>12</sup> These letters should be understood to participate in a metropolitan project of identity formation that writes the exotic settings of Jesuit missions in response to the broader evangelical and political project of the Society.

Craig Kallendorf has argued that the New World was "not so much 'discovered' as the result of transoceanic travel but 'invented' in a process by which the new was accommodated to the old".<sup>13</sup> I understand Jesuit mission epistolography as an important participant in that process of invention: these letters, addressed as they are to superiors in Europe, serve as fundamental tools in a colonizing impulse that remakes the missionary field in the image of the metropolitan centre. Writing on Jesuit sources for early Canadian history, Carole Blackburn reminds us that texts like the *relations* and other missionary reports are invested especially in the "production and manipulation of forms of knowledge".<sup>14</sup> The persistence of colonial ideologies across time and space, their ability to be imposed on dramatically different contexts, is the product especially of discourse: we can acknowledge that the work of colonization happens also, perhaps especially, in texts. Ragueneau's account of the fall of Wendake rewrites the ancient past into this new world. So, we do

11 Ignatius Loyola, *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, trans. George E. Ganss (St. Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1970), 292.

12 Friedrich addresses in particular the use of *exempla* in mission correspondence, showing that the informative and ethnographic narratives from the field are simultaneously understood by a Jesuit audience as exemplary models for spiritual edification; see especially Friedrich, "On Reading", 196–202.

13 Craig Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil: 'Pessimistic' Readings of the Aeneid in Early Modern Culture* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 70. In this important monograph, Kallendorf explores the ways that early modern poetry relies on innovative readings of Virgil to make sense of the European experience of the New World. Cf. also Philip Hardie, *The Last Trojan Hero: A Cultural History of Virgil's Aeneid* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2014), which likewise considers the influence of Virgil in early modern poetry. John C. Shield, *The American Aeneas: Classical Origins of the American Self* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001) demonstrates the ways in which Virgil's *Aeneid* informs the colonial logic of the national literary imagination in early modern America.

14 Blackburn, *Harvest of Souls*, 9.

not commonly say that the past repeats itself; it is history that repeats. Only when the text intervenes into the world, then can we discern the recursive qualities that inhere to human understandings of the past. Ragueneau's story of Wendake's destruction is formed in relation to Virgilian epic and thereby becomes a powerful tool in the production of a colonial reality that purports to make this New World intelligible to a European audience, to assimilate it to an ostensibly universal understanding of world history.<sup>15</sup> In his essay on the travel narratives of Jean de Léry, Michel de Certeau theorizes the translation of colonial knowledge back to Europe as an interpretive venture that adapted the realities of indigenous experience to European ways of knowing, especially the written text.<sup>16</sup> He identifies in ethnographic literature of the period a characteristic operation that demands oscillation between rupture and return: the heightened tension between the old and the new, the here and the there, the self and the other, finds resolution in a narrative impulse to sameness or identification. In European encounters with the New World, the proliferation of colonial literature, even of those texts ostensibly administrative in their function, represents an attempt to fashion what Ann Laura Stoler has called "grids of intelligibility" in an unsettled and uncertain landscape.<sup>17</sup>

We might, however, be tempted to mark in this corpus an apparent tension between the actively worked literary effects of the text and the function of these letters in the practical administration of the Jesuit mission in New France. In this paper, I argue that Ragueneau's epistolary corpus, even if not written for widespread publication, is self-consciously literary.<sup>18</sup> At the very least, the letters demand to be read in reference to a longstanding and widely acknowledged literary canon. At the same time, we cannot ignore that these texts are fundamentally administrative in their function. They report on the state of the Jesuit mission among the Wendat and include seemingly mundane

15 Cf. Michael T. Ryan, "Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 23, no. 4 (1981): 519–538.

16 Michel de Certeau, "Ethno-graphy, Speech or the Space of the Other: Jean de Léry" in *The Writing of History*, trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 209–243.

17 Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 1.

18 Ragueneau's letters were not themselves published. The *litterae annuae* were compiled and published only irregularly in the first half of the seventeenth century, but it is clear enough that these letters are the product of literary impulses similar to those that motivate the *litterae annuae*. On the compilation and publication of the *litterae annuae*, see Markus Friedrich, "Circulating and Compiling the *Litterae Annuae*: Towards a History of the Jesuit System of Communication", *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 77 (2008): 3–39.

details on provisions, on construction, and on staffing at the mission. The letters do offer important “documentary” evidence for the history proper of Jesuit missionary work in the eastern woodlands of North America and likewise the Jesuit encounter with indigenous peoples there. Even as these texts are highly rhetorical, that rhetorical character seems designed to buttress the perceived veracity of the reportage. But it is in this tension that we might best understand the work that Virgilian intertexts can accomplish in letters from the missionary field. Stoler is a useful guide for understanding the relationship between source and text in colonial contexts. Remarking on recent developments in historical ethnography, she explains that “[d]istinguishing fiction from fact has given way to efforts to track the production and consumption of facticities as the contingent coordinates of particular times and temperaments, places and purposes”.<sup>19</sup> With their allusive strategy, Ragueneau’s letters create a sense of veracity because they write a narrative situation at once recognizable to their addressee. They rely on literary representations of the past to process the lived experience of Jesuit missionaries in the New World. Stoler argues that “colonial archival documents serve less as stories for a colonial history than as active, generative substances with histories, as documents with itineraries of their own”.<sup>20</sup> The administrative function of a document should not be read in opposition to its rhetorical strategy. Ragueneau’s letters – and no less because they do the work of administering the mission – attempt to generate a kind of order in a colonial context marked by failure and uncertainty: by writing Virgil into his letters, Ragueneau imagines a New France whose history depends on a presumed relationship between the classical past and the colonial present.

## 2 Classical Literature and Early Modern Ethnography in New France

Our understanding of the early contact period in what is now Canada has been defined by the writings of Jesuit missionaries whose education, in fact whose entire world view, is permeated with classical learning and the cultural assumptions that undergird it. My argument here presumes that we can better understand the ways that early modern texts shape contemporary discourses of colonization, if we also look backwards at the ancient literary sources that inform the work of these Jesuit authors. Jesuits in New France cannot help but write classical literature into their texts: direct quotations,

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<sup>19</sup> Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 33.

<sup>20</sup> Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*, 1.

allusions, references, and reminiscences from ancient authors fill their pages.<sup>21</sup> Classical literature is at times deployed strategically, at times subconsciously in the writings of these missionaries. But because the famously systematized Jesuit education is predicated on classical learning, we need to track these references with careful attention and interrogate the thought worlds that they construct in the process.<sup>22</sup> The ancient past, especially as represented in classical literature, is a powerful referent for Jesuit missionaries to New France in their attempts to process for themselves and represent to others the nature of their experience in the sylvan landscape of Canada and among the so-called *sybvatici* or *sauvages* who lived there.<sup>23</sup> The most prominent example of this intellectual habit must be the ethnographic work of the Jesuit missionary Joseph-François Lafitau, whose *Moeurs des sauvages américains, comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* is foundational in modern ethnography.<sup>24</sup> His observations of Iroquoian culture in the seventeenth century were informed by the assumption of an essential unity of culture among humankind in the deeply ancient past, a unity that for him justified a comparative methodology in his ethnographic work. In accounting for the cultural and religious practices of indigenous peoples in early Canada, Lafitau makes regular comparisons to the so-called “pagan” customs of the ancient Greeks and Romans.<sup>25</sup> In many

21 For a general overview of Latin literature in early modern North America, see Jean-François Cottier, Haijo Westra and John Gallucci, “North America”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin*, ed. Sarah Knight and Stefan Tilg (Oxford: OUP, 2015), 541–556. For some individual case studies, see Haijo Westra, “Références classiques implicites et explicites dans les écrits des Jésuites sur la Nouvelle-France”, *Tangence* 92 (2010): 27–37; John Gallucci, “Latin Terms and Periphrases for Native Americans in the *Jesuit Relations*”, in *Latinity and Alterity in the Early Modern Period*, eds. Yasmin Haskell and Juanita Feros Ruys (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 259–72; John Gallucci, “Décrire les « Sauvages » : réflexion sur les manières de désigner les autochtones dans le latin des *Relations*”, *Tangence* 99 (2012): 19–34; Peter O’Brien “La *Franciade* de Le Brun: poétique ovidienne de l’exil en Nouvelle-France”, *Tangence* 99 (2012): 35–60; Nicolas Faelli, “Les références antiques des fondateurs de l’Amérique française au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle”, *Anabases* 26 (2017): 19–32.

22 For a recent overview on Jesuit pedagogy, see Paul Grendler, “Jesuit Schools in Europe: A Historiographical Review”, *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1 (2014): 7–25. On the role of the classics in Jesuit schools in New France, see A.J. Macdougall, “Classical Studies in Seventeenth-Century Quebec”, *Phoenix* 6, no. 1 (1952): 6–21.

23 On the various terms used to identify the indigenous people of North America in the writing of European authors, see Gallucci, “Latin Terms and Periphrases”.

24 On Lafitau as a forerunner of modern ethnography, cf. Christian Feest, “Father Lafitau as Ethnographer of the Iroquois”, *European Review of Native American Studies* 15, no. 2 (2001): 19–25. An important response to traditional interpretations of Lafitau’s work is Andreas Motsch, *Lafitau et l’émergence du discours ethnographique* (Sillery: Septentrion, 2001).

25 See, for example, also de Certeau and Hovde’s extended examination of classical iconography in the frontispiece of the 1724 edition of Lafitau’s *Moeurs des sauvages*; Michel de

ways, the category of pagan, though itself an unwieldy invention of ancient Christian authors and applied to diverse peoples and practices in antiquity, was for Lafitau, as for many authors of his day, a productive marker for understanding and ordering the cultural life of newly-encountered peoples.<sup>26</sup>

Of course, Lafitau arrived in New France in 1711, fifty years after Ragueneau left his post as superior of the Canadian mission. His ethnographic work stands as the most influential example of this tendency, but European appeals to the classical past as a source of cultural comparison in New France do not begin with him. Gabriel Sagard, a Récollet missionary among the Wendat, published in 1636 the first historical work on early Canada, *Histoire du Canada*. There he similarly relies on knowledge of antiquity to make intelligible for a European audience his experience of indigenous cultures in early Canada. In Sagard's history, the Wendat are sometimes compared directly to the Romans, as when Sagard references the writings of Marcus Aurelius on idleness and labor to explain the Wendat attitude to work.<sup>27</sup> Elsewhere, the Wendat are likened to the "barbarian" cultures Romans encountered in their imperial expansion: Sagard uses Tacitus's description of the child-rearing of the Cimbri as a means of praising the practices of Wendat mothers.<sup>28</sup> The Wendat and their culture are regularly valorized by these comparisons, and the stylized primitivism of Sagard's ethnographic digressions makes the ostensibly natural state of indigenous peoples in Canada a mirror that reflects the civilized decadence of France.<sup>29</sup>

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Certeau and James Hovde, "Writing vs. Time: History and Anthropology in the Works of Lafitau", *Yale French Studies* 59 (1980): 37–64; cf. also David Allan Harvey, "Living Antiquity: Lafitau's *Moeurs des sauvages américains* and the Religious Roots of the Enlightenment Science of Man", *Proceedings of the Western Society for French History* 36 (2008): 75–92. On the influence of the classics in the development of early ethnographic thought more broadly, see Emily Varto, *Brill's Companion to Classics and Early Anthropology* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

26 Cf. Ryan, "Assimilating New Worlds", 8–11.

27 Gabriel Sagard, *Histoire du Canada: Et Voyages Que Les Freres Mineurs Recollects yont faits pour la conversion des Infideles: Disisez en quatre liures* (Paris: Claude Sonnius, 1636), 252.

28 Sagard, *Histoire du Canada*, 336–7.

29 For example, the Wendat, like the Cimbri but unlike the French, raise hardy and healthy children: "Les Cimbres avoient accoustumé de mettre leurs enfans nouveaux naiz parmy les neiges, pour les endurcir au mal, & nos Gaulois au contraire les delicatent le plus qu'ils peuvent, pour les rendre fluets & mal sains de sorte que s'ils sentent un peu de vent, de chaud ou de froid plus qu'à l'ordinaire, tout est perdu, voyla un enfant malade, il faut le Médecin", *Histoire du Canada*, 336. This "stylized primitivism" is pervasive in Sagard's *Histoire*; cf. Bloechl's reading of the musical setting of Mi'kmaq chants that Sagard includes in his *Histoire*: "the settings in Sagard's travel history translated their source melodies from potentially pleasing but dangerous examples of immorality into songs



The earliest Jesuit missionaries take this connection further. In the writings of Paul LeJeune, their missionary work is invested in the propagation of an imperial programme linked directly to the Roman past. Writing to Pope Urban VIII, he remarks on the propagation of the *fines imperii* in the New World: “So true is that saying about the Roman city of old, that it advanced its borders more so by the Christian religion and by peace than it did by strength of arms. Before coming here, we could take faith in this fact from our memory of history. Now with our own eyes and in our own experience we confirm it daily”.<sup>30</sup> LeJeune writes the evangelizing project of the Jesuit order as a means of extending the borders of a Christian *imperium*, one explicitly tied to the history of the ancient world. Other Jesuits in New France likewise rely on a knowledge of the classical past to frame their experience in the New World. So, Jean de Brébeuf – in a long ethnographic digression included in a *relation* regularly cited by historians – recounts a series of “fables” told among the Wendat.<sup>31</sup> His last story tells the mythic journey of a young man and his band of staunch companions. He concludes the story with a famous line of Latin poetry and a sneer: “forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit, lors que ces pauvres gens éclaires du ciel se riront de leurs sottises, comme nous l’esperons”. But the Latin is revelatory and serves to nuance Brébeuf’s characterization of these stories as “nonsense”. The immediately recognizable hexameter of course comes from the *Aeneid*,<sup>32</sup> and the intertext rewrites the Wendat story into an epic framework. Brébeuf imagines the Wendat people as Trojans in search of a new (spiritual) home. The “nonsense” of the Wendat fable is revalued in light of the Virgilian intertext, but the quotation simultaneously serves to re-inscribe the colonial narrative of Brébeuf’s *relation*: the Wendat, like the Trojans, are in fact lost and the home they seek – consciously or not – can be found only in the Roman faith brought to their shores by these Jesuit missionaries. Elsewhere in this volume, Barton and Mailloux explore the ways in which François Du Creux’s *Historiae Canadensis* writes the beaver as an allegorical representation

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illustrating the chaste and simple nature of savages educated, settled, and converted to Catholicism”, in Olivia Bloechl, “The Pedagogy of Polyphony in Gabriel Sagard’s *Histoire du Canada*”, *Journal of Musicology* 22, no. 3 (2005): 403.

30 MNF 4.39.1, “Verissimum illud est quod de romana urbe veterum quisquam dixit, longius eam christiana religione ac pace quam armis fines imperii protulisse. Cuius rei fidem nos ex Annalium memoria capere antea solebamus. Nunc oculis ipsis usuque nostro quotidie comprobamus”. In Lucien Campeau, *Monumenta Novae Franciae* vol. 4 (Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1989), 57.

31 Lucien Campeau, *Monumenta Novae Franciae* vol. 3 (Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu), 354–55.

32 *Aen.* 1.203.

of French colonists in the New World, analogous in many ways to the bees of Virgil's *Georgics*.<sup>33</sup>

### 3 The Fall of Troy in Old Huronia

The proliferation of references to the classical past in the colonial literature of New France predicts the allusive strategy of Ragueneau in his letters recounting the destruction of Wendake. These letters, written while Ragueneau served as superior of the mission among the Wendat, form a logical corpus. Ragueneau had been sending annual letters to Rome from Sainte-Marie since being appointed mission superior in 1645, but the letter to Vincenzo Carafa dated 1 March 1649, in which Ragueneau describes the capture of the village of St. Joseph and the death of Antoine Daniel at the hands of the Haudenosaunee, displays a new sense of urgency. Daniel was the first of the Jesuits killed – martyred, according to Ragueneau – in the missionary field in New France since the deaths of Isaac Jogues and Jean de Lalande two years earlier.<sup>34</sup> His death marks, as Campeau says, “la fin d’une période” and inaugurates a time of increasing conflict.<sup>35</sup> From 1649, Ragueneau’s letters to Rome are more frequent and come to focus especially on the consequences of the destruction of the villages of Wendake, especially the deaths of his missionaries and the flight of the Wendat. In what follows, I focus on a corpus of five letters written by Ragueneau between 1 March 1649 and 8 October 1650. The first two report on the destruction of Wendake and the deaths of Jesuit missionaries among the Wendat. The final three are written in the immediate aftermath of the abandonment of the mission village at Sainte-Marie, the first on Gahoendoe and the latter two in Québec, after a long journey of exile eastward over land and river from Wendake.<sup>36</sup>

From our historical vantage, we can look back and see broad correspondences between the events that befell the Wendat and the plight of the Trojans in the *Aeneid*: the destruction of a homeland after long years of war and the subsequent exile of its people form the core of both stories. And for Ragueneau, Virgil’s epic should seem a natural referent. The Trojan War is a foundational trauma not just for Rome but for a series of post-Roman cultures that define

33 On Du Creux’s history, see also the work of Amélie Hamel, “Les *Historiae Canadensis* (1664) du père François Du Creux: enjeux et problèmes littéraires”, *Tangence* 92 (2010): 67–82.

34 *MNF* 7.140.2. Ragueneau labels the death of Antoine Daniel a *martyrium*.

35 Campeau, *MNF* 7.54, *pref.*

36 These letters are *MNF* 7.87, 7.104, 7.140, 7.146, 7.156.

themselves according to the terms of their assumed classical origins.<sup>37</sup> Just as readers of Virgil have long understood the *Aeneid* to be the product of a direct engagement with literary tradition, so too has Virgil's poetry generated an ongoing series of literary adaptations and transformations from antiquity onwards. In early modern Europe, the Trojan War does the work of myth in the most robust sense of that term: it conditions not just the literary choices of authors that recount the capture and destruction of cities, the flight of exiles, the colonization of new lands, but also the lived experience of those who participate in such events. Every fallen empire is a new Troy and every newly founded settlement, especially one at the centre of an imperializing project, is potentially a new Rome.<sup>38</sup> For the Jesuits, in their diverse literary endeavors, Virgil is an especially potent model. Haskell has traced the contours of what she calls a "cult of Virgil in the old Society of Jesus", his use as a source of classroom reading, as a model for literary production, even as a potential guide to the order's spiritual way of proceeding.<sup>39</sup>

Though the early modern period did see a resurgence of epic poetry in a distinctly Virgilian mode, Ragueneau relies on Virgil not for his formal or stylistic choices but in his attempts to reframe the catastrophic trauma experienced by the Jesuit mission among the Wendat within a broader historical understanding.<sup>40</sup> Ragueneau's use of Virgil is neither pervasive, nor does it exclude other referents. Christian scripture, for example, is regularly quoted and explicitly marked.<sup>41</sup> The Virgilian intertexts we will trace demand a more active reader, one aligned with Ragueneau's allusive strategy, but because Virgil is so central to Jesuit pedagogical practices, Ragueneau can make casual reference to the *Aeneid* and trust that the figurative work performed by the intertext

37 Cf. Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil*, v.

38 Greene, *The Light in Troy* is a classic study of the reception of Virgil in the Renaissance. Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil* has shown the ways in which readings of the *Aeneid* informed early modern European representations of the New World.

39 Yasmin Haskell, "Practicing What They Preach? Vergil and the Jesuits", in *A Companion to Vergil's Aeneid and its Tradition*, ed. Joseph Farrell and Michael C.J. Putnam (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 203.

40 Marie-Christine Pioffet has argued that the formal features of Jesuit writing in New France, in particular the *relations*, are the product of a persistent engagement with the epic tradition (rather broadly conceived); Pioffet, *La Tentation de l'Épopée*. This is a strong claim, one that does not always hold true, at least in these letters of Paul Ragueneau. The epistolary situation has its own formal conventions, and Ragueneau relies on Virgil's poetry to do different work in this different literary genre.

41 In *MNF* 7.140.1, Ragueneau quotes Job 19:21 directly. In the manuscript (ARSI *Gall.* 109 I, 123r), the quotation is underlined, seemingly in Ragueneau's own hand. Later in the same letter, he introduces a verse from a letter of Paul by explicitly citing its author; *MNF* 7.140.4, "ut nobis dictum appareat effatum illud Apostoli".

will be evident to readers like Carafa and Piccolomini. Indeed, in one of his responses to Ragueneau, Carafa acknowledges the explicitly “heroic” virtue of the Jesuits of New France.<sup>42</sup>

Ragueneau aligns the actions of the Wendat Christians and their Jesuit missionaries with the virtues of a heroic past, while depicting the Haudenosaunee, who most fervently resist the Jesuits and their “civilizing” programme, as motivated only by a barbaric *furor*. In these letters, as in the larger missionary project in New France, we can see how Ragueneau attempts to assimilate Wendat Christians to a recognizably European way of being and to render wholly Other those who would oppose Jesuit missionary intervention.<sup>43</sup> Virgil’s Aeneas, we know, is renowned for his sense of duty, his *pietas*.<sup>44</sup> Those who oppose him are driven by a passionate rage, a *furor* that is made the antithesis of the *pietas* that motivates Aeneas’s imperial ambitions.<sup>45</sup> Ragueneau, throughout his epistolary correspondence with his superiors in Rome, relies on that same moral framework: he constructs an opposition between the *furor* of the Haudenosaunee, characterized as a *gens impia*, and the *pietas* of the Jesuits and their Wendat Christians. What Ragueneau calls the *furor hostium barbarorum* is an ever-present threat to the security of the Wendat and the Jesuit missionaries among them.<sup>46</sup> He characterizes the Haudenosaunee as “a savage race

42 “Laudetur illius profusissima bonitas, per quem re, consolatione, gaudio et, quod caput est, virtute heroica in multiplici penuria, solitudine, tribulatione et difficultatibus abundastis”, *MNF* 7.80. Though the connection between “heroic” and “epic” should seem evident enough, note also that contemporary Jesuits saw them as analogous. The first (and only published) volume of the *Parnassus Societatis Iesu*, a collection of literature by Jesuit authors, contains verse labelled “epica seu heroica”; *Parnassus Societatis Iesu* (Frankfurt: Schönwetter, 1654).

43 McShea, *Apostles of Empire*, has explored the consequences of the “civilizing” programme that motivated so much of Jesuit missionary activity in New France.

44 Virgil’s use of *pious* as a defining epithet is pervasive and well-documented. One example is when Aeneas identifies himself to a disguised Venus: *Aen.* 1.378–9, “sum pius Aeneas, raptos qui ex hoste penates classe veho mecum, fama super aethera notus”.

45 In Jupiter’s prophecy, for example, Aeneas’s journey looks to a future in which the *impious furor* that once motivated war will be locked away: “Furor impius intus / saeva sedens super arma et centum vinctus aenis / post tergum nodis fremet horridus ore cruento” (*Aen.* 1.294–6). The direct opposition between *furor* and *pietas* is most clearly established in the epic simile used to describe Neptune calming the waters (*Aen.* 1.148–53); cf. Sarah Spence, “*Pietas* and *Furor*: Motivational Forces in the *Aeneid*”, in *Approaches to Teaching Vergil’s Aeneid*, eds. W.S. Anderson and L.N. Quatarone (New York: Modern Language Association, 2002), 46–52.

46 Especially in Ragueneau’s letter to Carafa on the death of Antoine Daniel, the author stresses the madness and rage of the Haudenosaunee, e.g., *MNF* 7.87.2: “Nimirum ita nos premit bellicus furor hostium barbarorum”. Variations of the phrase are repeated later in

and loving of war, with no faith, with no law and arrogant in their victories".<sup>47</sup> In Ragueneau's letters, this enemy is explicitly labelled *impius*.<sup>48</sup> It is *crudelis*.<sup>49</sup> It is *saevus*: Ragueneau describes the Haudenosaunee as "barbarously enraged" (*saevitum barbare*) in their killing of a Jesuit missionary.<sup>50</sup> And in a letter that Ragueneau sends from the French settlement at Quebec, he writes: "The tenacious hatred of the Iroquois continues to rage against our Christians".<sup>51</sup> The verb *saevire* recalls Virgil's frequent use of *saevus* to characterize those who stand in the way of Aeneas's mission, most notably Juno in the poem's first lines, but really all those who act against the demands of *pietas*.<sup>52</sup>

The Wendat Christians, on the other hand, are exemplary for their piety in this corpus of letters: "even the most holy could envy the *pietas* of the Wendat", according to Ragueneau.<sup>53</sup> On the covering page of another letter, Ragueneau underscores the "amazing capacity for piety in the barbarian neophytes".<sup>54</sup> The mission superior uses this *pietas* to valorize those Wendat who are the primary focus of the Jesuits' evangelizing efforts in New France. More pervasive, however (and perhaps not surprisingly), is the characterization of the Jesuit missionaries among the Wendat as especially pious. Writing of Antoine Daniel after his death, for example, Ragueneau claims that "he bequeathed to us a shining example of every virtue and to the Christian barbarians an extraordinary

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the letter: *MNF* 7.87.6, "hostium furor"; *MNF* 7.87.7 "hostilis ... furor". The exact phrase is repeated in a later letter: *MNF* 7.156.2, "oppresserat bellicus furor hostium barbarorum".

47 *MNF* 7.104.1, "gens fera bellicque amans, sine fide, sine lege suisque insolens victoriis".

48 *MNF* 7.104.4; *MNF* 7.140.8.

49 The adjective *crudelis* (along with its adverbial formations) appears at least 21 times in this corpus of five letters.

50 *MNF* 7.87.8.

51 *MNF* 7.156, "quorum odium tam pertinax in Christianos nostros saevire pergit".

52 *Aen.* 1.4, "saevae memorem Iunonis ob iram". Putnam notes the association of *saevus* with Aeneas's enemies in Book Seven of the *Aeneid*; Michael Putnam, *Virgil's Aeneid: Interpretation and Influence* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 119. Of course, the adjective eventually is associated with Aeneas himself, consumed as he is by anger in his final confrontation with Turnus; cf. Karl Galinsky, "The Anger of Aeneas", *AJP* 109, no. 3 (1988): 321–348.

53 *MNF* 7.87.4, "nec desunt nonnulli quorum virtuti, pietati et eximiae sanctitati invidere sancte possint etiam religiosi sanctissimi".

54 *MNF* 7.54, "mirabilis sensus pietatis in barbaris neophytis". This is one of six brief notes with which Ragueneau highlights the contents of his letter, regular practice in Jesuit mission epistolography. This text is on a second folio (ARSI Gal. 109 1 f. 203v) that serves as a kind of envelope for the letter itself. The sender and recipient are included above the fold and the notes below. Campeau includes the text in his description of the letter.

capacity for faith and piety”.<sup>55</sup> The phrase *sensus pietatis* repeats Ragueneau’s earlier description of the Wendat. That piety extends to all Ragueneau’s colleagues in the Jesuit mission among the Wendat: “I think hardly anything could be added to the piety, obedience, humility, patience, and charity of our brethren”.<sup>56</sup>

That sense of *pietas* is linked also to a heroic *virtus* reminiscent of ancient epic, especially in the deeds of those Jesuits martyred in the missionary field. Antoine Daniel was the village priest in Tennaostaie (St.-Joseph), when it was attacked by the Haudenosaunee in July 1648. Ragueneau characterizes him as a *vir magnarum virtutum*, then recounts the story of his death.<sup>57</sup> Daniel has just finished giving the morning mass when the village falls into chaos at the sound of the approaching enemy’s clamor.<sup>58</sup> The scene evokes Virgil’s depiction of the Greek capture of Troy: “Some rush into the fight, others flee headlong; everywhere is terror, everywhere lamentation”.<sup>59</sup> Ragueneau’s *ubique terror, ubique luctus* echoes Aeneas’s famous description of Troy as he ventures back into the city seeking death and renown: *crudelis ubique luctus, ubique pavor et plurima mortis imago* (*Aen.* 2.368–9). And Ragueneau depicts Daniel’s actions in the face of the enemy as reminiscent of Aeneas himself: “Antoine hastens wherever he saw the danger most threatening, and bravely encourages his people”.<sup>60</sup> The difference here is that Daniel moves through the village baptizing rather than fighting: “Many fell around him who received at the same instant the life-giving water of baptism, and the stroke of death”.<sup>61</sup> He baptizes the sick and the elderly in their homes before rushing to the church, now filled with baptized Christians and catechumens alike. He takes confession and offers baptism. Daniel even gives a short speech to his charges as they

55 *MNF* 7.87.11, “nobis virtutum omnium exemplum illustre, christianis barbaris fidei ac pietatis sensum eximium ... reliquerit”. Thwaites has translated this letter in *JR* 33, 252–269. I use his translation throughout with some minor modifications.

56 *MNF* 7.87.13, “vix ut putem ququam addi posse ad pietatem, obedientiam, humilitatem, patientiam, charitatem Nostrorum”.

57 *MNF* 7.87.7.

58 *MNF* 7.87.7.

59 *MNF* 7.87.7, “Ad alii sese praecipiant, ad fugam alii magis praecipites: ubique terror, ubique luctus”.

60 *MNF* 7.87.7, “Antonius, qua parte infestum imminere magis hostem sentit, illuc advolat suosque hortatur fortiter”.

61 *MNF* 7.87.7, “multi circa eum prostrati, quos simul vitalis unda baptismi, simul laethalis ictus exciperet”.

face down death, like Aeneas in that passage quoted above (*Aen.* 2.348–54).<sup>62</sup> Then the Haudenosaunee advance toward the church. Ragueneau writes:

In order that he delay the enemy and like a good shepherd aid his fleeing flock, he puts himself in the way of the armed men and breaks their attack; a single man against all, but truly filled with divine strength. He dies brave as a lion, who through all his life had been as the gentlest dove ... At last he fell, wounded by the lethal blow of a musket-shot and pierced with a barrage of arrows. He gave up to God the blessed spirit which like a good shepherd he laid down for his flock, calling upon the name of Jesus. Barbarously enraged against his lifeless body, hardly one of the enemy was there who did not add a new wound to his corpse, until at last, with the church set on fire, his naked body was cast into the flames and so thoroughly consumed that not even a bone remained. Certainly, he could not have been cremated by a more glorious funeral pyre.<sup>63</sup>

The correspondences to ancient epic here are broadly thematic rather than explicitly allusive. They are nevertheless pervasive. There is no single referent, but the scene of Daniel's death evokes most clearly the fate of Hector in the *Iliad*: the heroic *vir* is aided by divinity; he is likened to a lion; he is killed by the overwhelming rage of the enemy, his corpse the object of disgrace; his body is burned in a pyre. And like Hector, the fallen hero is a synecdoche for the fallen city.<sup>64</sup> Antoine Daniel's death predicts the fall of Saint-Joseph in Ragueneau's narrative, just as the deaths of Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant later

62 Daniel similarly focuses on what hope remains in the face of catastrophe, but there seems to be no explicit allusion to Aeneas's speech. For Daniel and his Christians, the hope that remains is God's love ("hoc credite, hoc sperate, ut vos Deus aeternum amet", *MNF* 7.87.7). For Aeneas, the saving grace of the conquered is that they have no hope of being saved ("una salus victis nullam sperare salutem", *Aen.* 2.354).

63 *MNF* 7.87.8, "ipse, ut hostem moretur et fugienti gregi consulat bonus pastor, obvium se praebet armato militi eiusque impetum frangit, vir unicus contra omnes, sed nimirum divino plenus robore, fortis ut leo moritur qui tota vita sua mitissimus fuerat ut columba ... Tandem lethali ictu prostratus emissae in eum catapultae densisque confosus sagittis, felicem animam, quam pro ovibus suis posuerat bonus pastor, Deo reddidit Iesum inclamans. Saevitum barbare in eius exsanguie corpus; vix ullus hostium ut fuerit qui mortuo novum vulnus non adiiceret, donec incensa demum aede sacra medias in flammas iniectum nudum cadaver ita est concrematum, ut ne os quidem ullum restaret. Nec sane poterat nobiliore rogo comburi".

64 Cf. Philip Hardie on Aeneas as a "synecdochic" hero in *The Epic Successors of Virgil* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4–5. For the connection between fallen heroes and fallen cities, see Alison Keith, "City lament in Augustan epic: antitypes of Rome from Troy to Alba Longa", in *The Fall of Cities in the Mediterranean: Commemoration in*

attend the fall of Saint-Ignace and Saint-Louis in a letter Ragueneau writes the following spring.<sup>65</sup> In Ragueneau's letter, the "extraordinary capacity for piety" that Daniel bequeathed to his Wendat congregation is exemplified by his heroic actions in the face of death. So, although we can acknowledge that *pietas* has a different semantic range in seventeenth century Jesuit texts than it did in the *Aeneid*, nevertheless we should be able to recognize how Ragueneau's letters adapt a Virgilian moral framework that links *pietas* to heroic action and sets them both in opposition to the *furor* of a barbaric enemy.

These Jesuits who share in Aeneas's *pietas* and *virtus* likewise share in his suffering: their work in the New World is repeatedly characterized as *labor* by Ragueneau. *Labor* is a watchword throughout the *Aeneid*, used especially to characterize the trials and hardships of Virgil's hero. In Ragueneau's letters on the destruction of Wendake, *labor* appears approximately twenty times. It is consistently the word that Ragueneau uses to describe the missionary work of the Jesuits (this is by far its most frequent usage), but as in the *Aeneid*, *labor* here carries also a sense of hardship or struggle. Ragueneau calls the mission among the Wendat *laboriosus*, even as he makes clear that the Jesuit *labor* in the missionary field is likewise a source of divine gifts.<sup>66</sup> In the sack of Saint-Louis, Ragueneau writes that Jean de Brébeuf and Gabriel Lalemant were urged by their Wendat congregation to flee the battle, because they would soon "labor for divine glory".<sup>67</sup> When reflecting on the burning of Sainte-Marie, Ragueneau writes: "in a single day, and almost in a moment, we saw consumed our *labor* of nearly ten years".<sup>68</sup> The work of these Jesuits to establish their mission was a *labor* epic in its scale: the temporal span of ten years matches that of the Trojan war. And like the Trojans, after long years of war and suffering, these Jesuits will find their mission destroyed and themselves in exile. Thereafter, the Jesuits and their Wendat Christians face further trials: the work of their exile is similarly characterized as *labor*. The attempt to establish their defences on Gahoendoe is a *bellicus labor* and the task of readying that fort for a winter with limited supplies is an *operiosior labor*.<sup>69</sup>

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*Literature, Folk-Song and Liturgy*, ed. Mary R. Bachvarova, Dorota Dutsch and Ann Suter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 162.

65 In *MNF* 7.104, Ragueneau both recounts the destruction of the two mission villages and offers a hagiographical account of the lives and deaths of the two missionaries.

66 *MNF* 1.104.62, "in has missiones laboriosas".

67 *MNF* 1.104.3, "divinae gloriae felicius postmodum allaboraturus".

68 *MNF* 7.140.8, "Atque adeo una die ac fere momento absumi vidimus labores nostros decem propemodum annorum".

69 *MNF* 7.140.9 and 7.140.10.



In fact, the letters written after the destruction of Wendake emphasize the experience of exile in language deeply reminiscent of the *Aeneid*. The correspondences we have explored thus far, though pervasive in Ragueneau's epistolary corpus, often lack a single, obvious textual referent. We might be tempted to assume that Ragueneau, so thoroughly schooled in the Latin of Virgil, naturally and unconsciously adopts features of the poet's language when he writes. In such a reading, Virgil's poetry would be so deeply ingrained that Ragueneau has no way to describe his experience in the New World without some implicit reference to it. But the thematic relevance of these allusions is activated by the author's explicit quotation of the *Aeneid* in his letters. In the immediate aftermath of the burning of Sainte-Marie, Ragueneau laments that their ten years' *labor* had once "given us the hope that we could produce the necessities of life, and thus maintain ourselves in this country without aid from France. But God has willed otherwise; our home is now forsaken, our Penates forsaken; we had to move elsewhere, and, in the land of our exile, had to seek exile anew".<sup>70</sup> The direct quotation is *Deo aliter visum*, modified slightly from Virgil's *dis aliter visum* (*Aen.* 2.428). The phrase comes from a moment when Aeneas is describing the deaths of his band of Trojan heroes, after they had been discovered by Greek forces and routed. Ragueneau makes meaning from the trauma of Wendake's fall by relying on Aeneas's attempts to explain the apparent injustice of the fall of Troy and the deaths of her heroes. The reference to *desolati penates* further underscores this connection. That phrase actually comes almost directly from a line in Statius's *Silvae* 2.1, but no matter the hypo-text, Ragueneau's reference to the *penates* maintains an explicit connection to an ancient Roman past.<sup>71</sup> And the *penates* of Troy are likewise thematized throughout the *Aeneid*, connected as they are to Aeneas's mission to establish for them and for his people a new home. Like the *desolati penates* of Ragueneau's letter, the Trojan *penates* have been conquered, and that conquest predicts a journey of exile.<sup>72</sup> The Wendat, like the Trojans, are *profugi*,<sup>73</sup> and the Jesuit missionaries follow their *fugientem gregem* first through Wendake

70 MNF 7.140. "adeoque perstare nos potuisse in his regionibus sine auxilio Galliae. Sed Deo aliter visum est: desolata nunc domus desolatique penates alio migrandum fuit et in terra exilii nostri novum exilium quaerendum".

71 Stat. *Silv.* 2.1.67, "muta domus, fateor, desolatique penates". Statius is describing the state of mourning in Melior's household following the premature death of his young *libertus* Glaucias.

72 The Trojan *penates* are *victi*; cf. *Aen.* 1.68, 8.11.

73 Cf. *Aen.* 1.2, "fato profugus".

and then across the very breadths of New France.<sup>74</sup> Ragueneau claims that the Jesuits themselves, by the help they have offered to their Wendat congregation, have earned the title *parentes patriae*, the *patria* in this case being Wendake.<sup>75</sup> In republican Rome, that title was reserved for those who saved the city from some existential crisis.<sup>76</sup> And though Aeneas is nowhere in the *Aeneid* styled *pater* or *parens patriae*, he is commonly identified as *pater Aeneas*.<sup>77</sup> The Jesuit missionaries too are *patres*, a religious title that reinforces their connection to Aeneas in this journey of exile. Even the setting of their new home on Gahoendoe is likened to the Hesperian wilderness of the Italian mainland. When Aeneas and his crew first land at Cumae, in the opening lines of *Aeneid* 6 they raid the *densa ferarum tecta* in search of food.<sup>78</sup> Gahoendoe, where the Wendat and their Jesuit missionaries attempt to found a new home, once had *ferarum tecta* where now they build the foundations of their fort.<sup>79</sup> Never since the founding of the world – Ragueneau writes *ab orbe condito* – had the trees on this island suffered the axe.<sup>80</sup>

But this new foundation on Gahoendoe only lasted the year. Their homeland already lost, the Wendat who gathered on that island faced a dreadful famine and ruinous plague. In the spring of 1650, they resolved to travel by canoe to Quebec.<sup>81</sup> In a letter written after that journey was complete, Ragueneau again makes clear with explicit quotation that the exile of the Trojans after the fall of Troy informs his understanding of this experience. Outlining to his superior

74 *MNF* 7.140.9, 7.146.3, 7.156.4. The word *fuga*, including compounds and verbal formations, appears 24 times in this corpus.

75 *MNF* 7.140.6, “Sic adeo ut parentes patriae publice iam vocemur”.

76 E.g., Camillus in Livy, 5.49. Cicero, Caesar, and Augustus were likewise granted the title. Later, it would be frequently, though not automatically, conferred as an imperial honorific.

77 Cf. *Aen.* 2.2.

78 *Aen.* 6.7–8.

79 *MNF* 7.140.9.

80 *MNF* 7.140.9. This seeming play on “ab urbe condita” is just barely allusive, but it does help maintain the intertextual frame of reference.

81 *MNF* 7.146, “patriis devecti cimbis”. The word Ragueneau uses for canoe is *cymba*, rather an uncommon word in ancient sources. It can mean any small boat, but in classical Latin it most commonly identifies the boat with which Charon crosses the river Styx. It is one of the Latin words sometimes used in contemporary texts to name the birch bark canoes Europeans encountered in the eastern woodlands of North America; cf. the use of the term throughout the *Monumenta Historica Missionis Canadensis* of François Ragueneau (Paul’s brother), in Lucien Campeau, ed., *Monumenta Novae Franciae* vol. 3 (Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1987), 426, 427, 433, 434, 437, 450. At the same time, the epic resonances in the rest of this corpus might still suggest an association with the ferry of Charon. In *Aeneid* 6, Virgil uses *cymba* with a compound of *veho*, as Ragueneau does here. The allusion is strained, but the figurative connection would be appropriate, given the circumstances of the journey.

the motivations for this further move, he writes, "The first reason is that our Wendat, overwhelmed by a deathly hunger and afflicted by these so many and recent disasters, now abandon all hope of guarding their outpost, where they took themselves under our protection; and so dispersed and tossed here and there they consider seeking different exiles and different lands".<sup>82</sup> The Wendat, like the Trojans of the *Aeneid*, are a *gens sparsa* in Ragueneau's account.<sup>83</sup> What is more, the last words of that sentence, *diversa exilia et diversas quaerere terras*, are a nearly exact quotation from the opening lines of *Aeneid* 3. That book begins: "After the gods had seen fit to overthrow Asia's power and Priam's innocent people, and proud Ilium fell and the ground was smoking through all of Neptune's Troy, we were forced by the prophecies of the gods to seek different exiles and deserted lands".<sup>84</sup> This is Aeneas's description of the Trojan fate in the moments immediately following the destruction of their city. Ragueneau's quotation is left unmarked in the manuscript, but because he maintains the metrical structure of the clause, it is immediately recognizable. Here, in the midst of a prose letter sent from the wilderness of this new world, a single line of poetry carries readers back to ancient epic and asks us to consider the fate of the Wendat alongside that of the Trojans. The fall of Wendake can be meaningful for Ragueneau, if like the fall of Troy, it looks ahead to some new foundation, some new community bound by shared experience and supported by the will of the gods (or rather, God).

This does make Ragueneau's letters a kind of interpretive venture, even if the reading offered of the *Aeneid* seems strictly conventional. The Wendat and their Jesuit allies are likened to the long-suffering but eventually triumphant Trojans. The role of captain and epic hero is reserved for the Jesuit fathers themselves. They are *parentes patriae*, they are *patres*, they are the heroic *vir*. The Wendat are an undifferentiated whole, rarely displaying agency, but characterized by the *pietas* they share with their Jesuits. Similarly, the Haudenosaunee, an *impius hostis*, are moved solely by a wild and barbaric *furor*. The "further" voices of Virgil that Kallendorf has identified in early modern epic poetry are not so clearly present here, even as Ragueneau's colonial narrative writes the Wendat into an historical schema that makes them active participants in this

82 *MNF* 7.146.2, "Altera quod Hurones nostri, tum funesta exhausti fame, tum recentibus atque iis permultis afflicti cladibus, spem iam omnem abiicerent tuendae stationis suae, quo se receperant tutati praesidio nostro; adeoque huc illuc sparsi disiectique cogitabant diversa exilia et diversas quaerere terras".

83 Cf. *Aen.* 1.602.

84 *Aen.* 3.1–5, "Postquam res Asiae Priamique evertere gentem immeritam visum superis, ceciditque superbum Ilium et omnis humo fumat Neptunia Troia, diversa exilia et desertas quaerere terras".

imperial project in the New World.<sup>85</sup> Brazeau has remarked on the tendency apparent in Jesuit writings from New France to mask “shortcomings, fears, violence and failures”.<sup>86</sup> In his letters, Ragueneau does not diminish the catastrophic failure of their mission among the Wendat, but by writing this contemporary narrative as a repetition of Virgilian epic, he imagines a teleological history that accommodates the possibility of triumph, no matter how distant that future. In fact, despite the apparent failure of the mission in Wendake, the foundation of a Wendat community at the French settlement of Québec represents a more thorough integration of these indigenous Christians into the larger French imperial programme in the New World. A Wendat community would eventually thrive here, but this success will come only after further disaster and only after Ragueneau had departed New France.<sup>87</sup>

Nevertheless, François Ragueneau, himself a Jesuit and (very briefly) a missionary to New France, could write a poem to commemorate his brother Paul’s tenure in Canada that presents him as a triumphant hero.<sup>88</sup> The poem merits a further study of its own, but for present purposes, we can see how it reinforces the narrative that Paul Ragueneau himself endorsed in his letters to Rome. François calls the former superior of the Canadian mission *pater patriae*,<sup>89</sup> and he depicts him as the captain of a *galeatum praesidium* arrayed against a ferocious enemy.<sup>90</sup> This is praise poetry, of course, and written by kin, but the classical resonances are nevertheless useful in helping us to see the extent to which the Jesuit project in New France comes to be identified with a glorious ancient past, especially through discursive performances like this poem and Ragueneau’s letters. When Paul Ragueneau writes his experience of the new world, he is by necessity constructing “grids of intelligibility” that allow not only the reader, but also the author himself to understand an experience

85 Cf. the discussion of Ercilla’s *La Araucana* in Kallendorf, *The Other Virgil*, 77–102.

86 Brian Brazeau, *Writing a New France, 1604–1632: Empire and Early Modern French Identity* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 59.

87 For an historical account of the post-diaspora Wendat communities around the French settlement at Québec, see the chapter, “The East: The Loretans” in Labelle, *Dispersed But Not Destroyed*, 99–119.

88 I have consulted a copy made by Felix Martin and housed in the Jesuit Archives of Canada in Montréal, AJC MS 0100-0101.2.B. The copy was made from an original manuscript held at the Archives jésuites in Vanves, France. Jones’s notes on the manuscript suggest that the poem, dated to 1665, was sent to the Jesuit General Superior Giovanni Paolo Oliva.

89 AJC MS 0100-0101.2.B, “tunc patrem patriae verus et nova Francia dicavit”.

90 AJC MS 0100-0101.2.B, “hinc galeatum mittat in hostes praesidium attonitis et in omni gente laboret”. The hexameter line beginning with praesidium is a near direct quotation of Juv. *Sat.* 8.239.

that resists traditional modes of interpretation. In his epistolary corpus, Paul Ragueneau writes a story of the new world that repeats and re-inscribes the values of a classical past.

We must therefore ask to what extent the classical is implicated in the production of colonial histories. To what extent do modern historians of the colonial past rely on narratives informed by a classical imaginary? Does the recognition that Ragueneau shapes his ostensibly documentary narrative in response to a tradition of classical literature change how we understand the events he recounts? Ragueneau attempts to write the Wendat sympathetically as participants in an epic narrative of struggle and success, but, in the process, he cannot but subsume the voices and experiences of the Wendat themselves. These letters and cognate documents have thus come to define a “discourse of destruction” that pervades academic scholarship on the dispersal of the Wendat in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, the larger corpus of Jesuit writings in New France has been an essential witness for the study of early modern Canada. It documents some of the earliest contacts between Europeans and the indigenous populations they encountered in the new world. It has been used by academic historians and First Nations peoples in Canada to reconstruct the social and cultural organization of historical indigenous communities and, for this reason, it continues to be fundamental to our understanding of this formative period in the European colonization of North America. Attention to the ways in which Ragueneau's history of the fall of Wendake resonates with Virgilian epic helps us see more clearly the constructiveness of the sources on which our histories depend.

Ragueneau's intertexts remind us of the discursive patterns that shape our histories, but also how those patterns come to shape our very experiences. The mythical past offers a kind of explanation for the traumatic suffering of the Wendat and the Jesuit missionaries among them. That aetiology in turn suggests a teleological vision of history that allows Ragueneau and his colleagues to imagine a future in which they might be lauded as epic heroes, as *patres patriae* in this New World. Through this corpus, we come to see just one of the ways that classical literature was deployed in New France. Ragueneau's letters fashion a missionary identity rooted in a sense of continuity between the ancient and the modern, the old world and the new. These Jesuit heroes can remake in this new world a Christian empire that reflects the epic virtues of the classical past. If you read closely enough, Ragueneau seems to suggest, you

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91 Labelle, *Dispersed But Not Destroyed*, 196–214.

might already see in the story of Old Huronia, in that destruction, in that exile, even in that suffering, the possibility of a new foundation.

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